



Georgia Safe Routes to School Resource Center Monthly Progress Report March 2015

The Resource Center serves the State of Georgia by delineating outreach efforts into five geographic territories, serving 430 school Partners across the state. Additionally, the Resource Center has 288 Friends, or community stakeholder partners that support the state's mission, but that are not schools themselves. A map of the five outreach territories and the distribution of SRTS Partner Schools (denoted by dots), is shown on the right. The map also displays locations for National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Child Pedestrian Curriculum trainings, the site of the 2014 Georgia Forum, and sites of SRTS Travel Plans administered by the Resource Center since the project's start in 2009.

In March, the Resource Center School Outreach Coordinators (SOCs) held 87 meetings and gave 19 presentations. SOCs also supported four infrastructure project ribbon-cutting ceremonies. Georgia Walk to School Day (gWalk) was on March 4th, and the Resource Center encouraged schools and communities to hold events. Throughout the month, 122 events were registered and supported.

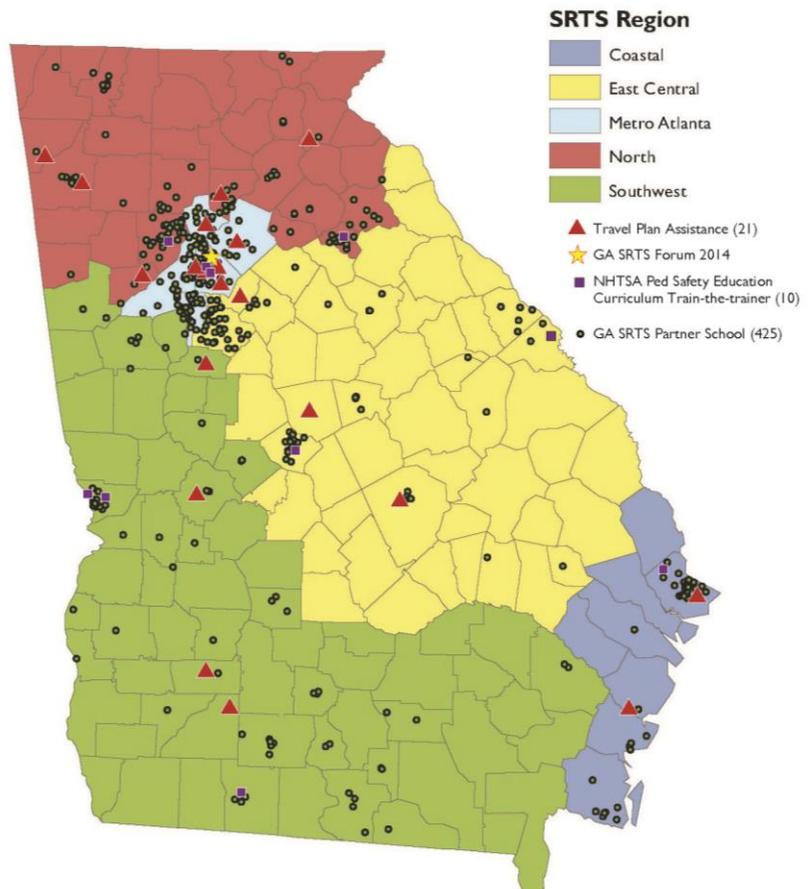
The project team met in Macon for the first Quarterly Team Meeting of 2015 on March 23rd and 24th. The meeting included a client presentation, staff training, and 2015 Statewide SRTS Forum planning sessions. The team also toured the Forum venue, Central High School in Macon.

All Partners are listed on the complete Partner list at the back of this report. [Click here](#) for more information about the Resource Center's Partnership program.

Outreach

Metro Atlanta Territory – Nichole Hollis, School Outreach Coordinator (SOC)

Nichole serves 134 partner schools in the Metro Atlanta Territory. The Resource Center is excited to welcome **Mount Zion Elementary School** in Clayton County as a new partner school and Bike Roswell as a new Friend partner! In March, Nichole supported 53 Georgia Walk to School Day Events, a Comprehensive Travel plan, a Safety-Focused Report, and an infrastructure awardee ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Palmetto Elementary School in Fulton County celebrated their new crosswalks and sidewalks with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and gWalk Event on March 11th. More than 30 students participated in the event including Principal Jaqueline Bowens, representatives from the Georgia Department of Transportation, and local media.

On Georgia Walk to School Day (March 4th), schools in Metro Atlanta organized walking school bus groups, created special announcement videos and signs for their event, and partnered with community organizations including:

- **Drew Charter School** (in Fulton County) celebrated Georgia Walk to School Day on March 6th with more than 30 students! The snowy weather did not stop these eager children from walking to school with their friends and parents. Students held homemade *walk to school* signs to represent their walking school bus group and received bracelets and stickers as they arrived to school. The photo on the right shows students holding signs to promote this event.
- **Mount Zion Elementary School:** Nichole held a safety presentation for 30 student walkers before their *walk from school to home* event. The students were excited to participate in the event which included the “Doc Broc” mascot from Kaiser Permanente. See photo at right of Nichole (on left) with Doc Broc and a Safe Kids representative. Clayton County Safe Kids organization also partnered with SRTS and provided stickers to the students.



In April, Nichole will attend several Earth Day events and health and wellness events with schools and community organizations. She will focus her efforts on supporting **Drew Charter School** with the completion of their SRTS comprehensive travel plan and **Henderson Mill Elementary School** with their safety-focused report. She also plans to provide schools with planning assistance for Bike to School Day, complete student travel tallies, and encourage schools to nominate their school for the 2015 Partner of the year award.

East Central Territory - Taki Smith, School Outreach Coordinator

Taki currently supports 81 Partners in the East Central Territory. In March, the East Central Territory was filled with exciting walking events and new infrastructure celebrations. Taki focused on delivering Georgia Walk to School (gWalk) incentives, meeting with potential schools, attending SRTS events, updating the Resource Center Facebook page, promoting Walk to School Day, and planning the 2nd Annual SRTS Statewide Forum.

In March, Taki had 23 schools register for gWalk in the East Central Territory! In conjunction with gWalk, Taki collaborated with the **GDOT** District Communication Officers and planned three ribbon-cutting ceremonies in Henry, Newton, and Columbia Counties to celebrate their new crosswalks and sidewalks. Taki attended several gWalk events this month and also partnered with **Peach State Health Plan-East Central**, a Friend of the Resource Center, with planning collaborative events.

In addition to gWalk, Taki organized a SRTS safety awareness assembly for **Lewiston Elementary School**, located in Columbia County, where she also planned their Walk to School Day and ribbon cutting ceremony. Taki partnered with **GDOT**, the **Columbia County Sherriff's Department**, **Wheel Movement**, and the **Columbia County West Rotary Club** to provide pedestrian safety information to students during their event. She presented to more than 200 fourth grade students during their ribbon cutting ceremony. See the photo at the right featuring Taki along with PE Coaches/Champions, Principal Dr. Mike Doolittle, and safety patrol students.



gWalk Highlights:

- **West Newton Elementary School**, in Covington, had more than 740 students participating. The school celebrated its new GDOT SRTS infrastructure and hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Following the ceremony, students, faculty, and staff paraded around the school, showing off their SRTS bracelets. The photo to the right includes students and a faculty member at West Newton who participated in Walk at School Day.
- **Freedom Park School**, in Augusta, Georgia (Fort Gordon Military Base) celebrated Walk to School Day. More than 600 students participated and were walked to school by Fort Gordon soldiers. The soldiers formed walking school buses and picked up students at designated areas on the military base. Once the students arrived to school, they were cheered on by cheerleaders and greeted by more soldiers. The photo on the right was taken by the media and captures one of the students arriving to school greeting the soldiers. This photo was graciously provided by a staff photographer of the *Military Times* at Fort Gordon.
- **Wesley Lakes Elementary School**, in McDonough, celebrated Walk to School Day with more than 50 students and their parents on March 5th. The students received SRTS stickers and bracelets once they arrived to school. **Peach State Health Plan** also partnered and provided additional healthy snacks and resources to the students and parents. Following the walk to school, a ribbon-cutting ceremony took place with special guests Dana Lemon, GDOT Congressional District 13 Board Member, and several other GDOT officials. The photo to the left includes student safety patrol members; GDOT Board Member, Dana Lemon; and Wesley Lakes Elementary administration staff.



Southwest Territory – Chelsea Carter, School Outreach Coordinator

Chelsea maintains relationships with 69 Partners in the Southwest Territory. This year, 21 schools participated in Georgia Walk to School Day in both rural and suburban areas, which was a 30% increase over 2014 participation levels. Chelsea offered NHTSA lessons to her schools detailing safety and rules of the road. The following schools had NHTSA lessons taught to selected grades, for a combined total of more than 1,100 students reached.

- **Jesup Elementary School**, Wayne County, 5th grade
- **Screven Elementary School**, Wayne County, 5th grade
- **Webster Elementary School**, Webster County, K-2nd
(Photo at right shows Chelsea with students and PE teacher at Webster County School.)
- **Lanier Elementary School**, Lanier County, 3-5th grades
- **Pinevale Elementary School**, Lowndes County, K-6th



Students were given NHTSA pre- and post-tests whenever time and resources allowed. These tests were used to determine a baseline of knowledge and to gauge the effectiveness of the lessons. Pre-test results proved that 50% of students did not understand the Rules of the Road or flow of traffic, or know the definitions of terms including “pedestrian.” The post-tests yielded a pass rate close to 90%. Based on Chelsea’s testing and presentations, it was clear that the NHTSA lessons were effective in educating the children.

Georgia Walk to School Day also provided a opportunity for schools that were awarded infrastructure funding, to celebrate and highlight the changes to their campus. **J.L. Newbern Middle School** in Valdosta hosted an event to acknowledge the assistance from both Safe Routes to School and the community that provided the new sidewalk and flashing signals. The school’s event included speeches by the local major, councilmen, officers, as well as SRTS SOC Chelsea Carter.

In March, two Walk Audits took place in the Southwest Territory.

- **North Mitchell County Elementary School** was awarded a Safe Routes to School Safety-Focused Report, and a walk audit was conducted as part of that process. On March 11th, the school held a meeting and walk audit with the Resource Center’s planning team from Toole Design Group. School staff, community supporters, and Resource Center team members discussed campus needs and then conducted the walk. The Resource Center planners set up a “Pop Up” crossing to act as a visual guide to possible changes that could be made. **Regional Commission Planner, Barbara Reddick**, was in attendance and is supporting efforts to identify funding sources that could be used to implement the suggested changes.
- The **Carrollton Safe Routes to School Task Force** hosted its own walk audit with the aid of **Tanner Medical**. The audit included National Safe Routes to School Partnership’s Regional Manager, **Stephanie Weather**, as well as staff from Carrollton Elementary, Middle, and High Schools, local police officials, and Resource Center staff. The team observed arrival, walked the campuses, and discussed possible changes to improve safety for walkers and cyclists to campus. The Task Force anticipates the report from this walk will aid in the presentation of the SRTS program to the Board in May or August.

April will be active in the Southwest. Chelsea is promoting Spring Travel Tallies, Partner of the Year Nominations, SRTS Forum reservations, as well as May’s Bike to School Day. Along with these events, Chelsea is offering to read Dr. Seuss’s book [Oh, the Things You Can DO That are Good for You](#) to students at Partner schools. This book discusses healthy habits including exercise and helmet safety. This is another opportunity for schools to support SRTS events without much planning or engage with the program in rural areas where students are unable to walk to school regularly.

North Georgia Territory – Patti Sistrunk, Interim School Outreach Coordinator

This territory has 106 Partner Schools. During March, the project team continued to focus on the **Turner Middle School** Travel Plan in Douglas County. The local SRTS team assembled for Meetings 2 and 3 of the Travel Planning process on March 17th and 19th – while the engineering and planning meetings were held with local and state engineers on the 18th. Meeting 2 included a walk audit and discussion of area maps and student location data. The team noted exciting opportunities to connect the school with neighboring **Lithia Springs Elementary**. Local SRTS team members discuss opportunities over maps at Meeting 2 in the photo on the right.

Thirteen North Georgia schools registered events for Georgia Walk to School Day. Nichole from Metro Atlanta and Patti provided incentives and supported these events with resources and materials.



A new School Outreach Coordinator was hired for North Georgia. Elizabeth Jones will begin work on April 20th. She is currently the manager and trainer for the Atlanta City Schools Crossing Guard program. She also has experience in marketing and radio production. The project team looks forward to welcoming her to the Resource Center.

Coastal Georgia Territory – Patti Sistrunk, School Outreach Coordinator and Project Manager

Patti maintains 40 School Partners in Coastal Georgia. This month, Katelyn DiGioia at GDOT was contacted by the new Campus Police Chief of the **Savannah Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS)**. Katelyn directed Chief Terry Enoch to Patti to discuss an on-going effort to improve safety along routes in targeted high-crime areas of Savannah. Patti met with the Chief and provided a framework plan for making routes safer and implementing walking school buses.



Later in the month, Patti presented to the SCCPSS officers, principals of target schools (**Hodge Elementary, DeRenne Middle, and Beach High**) and Savannah Chatham Police Department officials. Patti also enlisted the help of Paula Kreissler from **Healthy Savannah** to discuss that organization's work at Hodge Elementary and throughout the city with regard to safe routes. Patti is also coordinating mapping support from the **Coastal Regional Commission** and will meet with Alison Huffman from **Safe Kids Savannah** to request pedestrian-safety education support.

Patti attended gWalk festivities at **Butler Elementary** in Savannah. Students walked to school and were greeted by teacher and Champion, Amelia Vaughn. Approximately 50 students walked to school and also received incentives from the Resource Center. **Windsor Forest Elementary** continued its Walk to School Fridays on the third Friday in March. That morning, it was rainy and muddy, but about 45 students made it out and received incentives for participating. See photos at right from Butler (top) and Windsor Forest (bottom.)



Marketing and Resource Development

Georgia Walk to School Day (gWalk) was March 4th. Event registration and participation were promoted throughout the month, and team members delivered incentives to participating schools in advance of the events. A post-event survey was also distributed to participating schools.

The team met in mid-March in Macon for a Quarterly Team Meeting, during which the staff also continued planning for the GA Statewide SRTS Forum, scheduled for June 5th. The team toured the venue, Central High School, with support from the **Bibb County School District**. The project team discussed the agenda, sessions, and logistics.

The team posted to Facebook 19 times including uploading photos to a gWalk photo album on the Facebook page. [Click here to see the photos.](#)

National Bike to School Day is May 6th. The National Center for SRTS supports registration for this event at www.walkbiketoschool.org. The Resource Center will promote the event, provide support to schools and community partners planning events, and will provide incentives to partners.



The [Georgia Bike Rodeo Toolkit](#) was published to the website in March. The toolkit is available in download form as well as in "flipbook" form. SOCs will encourage its use especially during National Bike Month in May.

The project team continues to coordinate with the GDOT Communications Team and will work closely with District Communications Officers (DCOs) to promote events and resources regionally and statewide.

Travel Plan Assistance

The Resource Center team continued work on the Travel Plans and Safety-Focused Reports. The Outreach Coordinators supported Meetings 2 and 3 at Travel Plan recipients and the walk audit portion of the Safety-Focused report process. Meeting 2 consisted of a walk audit and infrastructure discussions. After the meeting, the planning teams from Resource Center met with engineers and local planners to discuss feasibility and priorities. During each Meeting 3, the draft plans were presented to the local SRTS teams for further discussion. Planning teams from the Resource Center partner Toole Design Group came down to provide planning consultation. For more information on the planning process, visit <http://www.saferoutesga.org/content/safe-routes-school-travel-plans-and-reports>.

Travel Plan Assistance

Drew Charter School, Fulton County
Turner Middle School, Douglas County

Safety-Focused Report

Henderson Mill Elementary School, DeKalb County
North Mitchell County Elementary, Mitchell County

Thirty Day Look Ahead

The Outreach team will continue to work with schools, districts, and communities to plan events and resources that support walking and biking programs. Elizabeth Jones, new School Outreach Coordinator for North Georgia, will begin work on April 20th. Patti and the Resource Center team will train her during her first two weeks of work.

In April, the Resource Center team will encourage schools to complete Student Travel Tallies. Additionally, the team will solicit nominations for the 2014-15 School Year Safe Routes to School Partner of the Year Awards. Each territory recognizes one school annually for this award. Deadline for nominations is April 23rd.

National Bike to School Day is May 6th and is sponsored by the National Center for SRTS. Schools will be encouraged to register, and incentives will be provided to schools that hold events throughout May (Bike Month).