



COALITION FOR TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

August 6, 2010

"Be counted among the millions of participants across the country who will Walk to School in October!"

Dear Educators and members of the community:

With a concern for health issues, a high interest in safety for our student population, and a desire to reduce our carbon footprint, you and members of your organization might be interested in **International Walk to School Day on October 6, 2010**. This program for elementary and middle schools can be organized either as an event for the entire school or for just one classroom. Your participation, as an educator, school official, parent or concerned adult, will help make the experience of walking to school a success for the children, on October 6th and on other school days, as well!

Audubon Society of RI, Sierra Club, Coalition for Transportation Choices, AARP, and the RI Safe Routes to School program are sponsoring the event in Rhode Island. We ask you to do 2 things:

- (1) volunteer to contact the schools you work with and offer to help interested teachers and principals organize a Walk to School Day event; and
- (2) make sure your school's participation is registered on line at <http://www.walktoschool.org>. and let us know where you are volunteering for an International Walk to School Day event via email to emarks@asri.org so that we can follow up.

We will help you or your contact to plan an event to encourage walking and bicycling as behaviors to improve health and reduce vehicle emissions. We can provide posters and suggestions for programs. Ideas for October 6 and beyond include:

"Walking School Bus" where parents or a celebrity and students walk and pick up others along the way. Which school can have the longest walking school bus?

"Wise Elders Walk" in which town officials who implement programs for safe walking can receive a "Golden Sneaker Award."

"With-it Walkers" which pairs adult relatives with students, and both groups benefit from pedestrian trips to school. Which school will have the greatest percentage of participation?

For more ideas click on www.walktoschool.org. Working together, we can reduce obesity and improve physical conditions by following the RI Department of Health's prescription to walk!

Year round the Rhode Island Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program (RI Dept. of Transportation and RI Statewide Planning Program) put into action "Safe Routes to School," a federal program that allows municipalities to apply for funding to promote safe non-motorized access to schools. A wealth of ideas, information, links, etc. is on the National Center for Safe Routes to School website at www.saferoutesinfo.org. Cities and towns may apply for these funds through the state. For more information on SRTS, please contact Ronnie Sirota, the RI Safe Routes to School State Coordinator at rsirota@doa.ri.gov or at 222-1233 or visit RI SRTS at www.planning.ri.gov/transportation/srts/srts.htm.

Whether or not your community school is participating in the formal SRTS grant program at this time, you can participate in SRTS activities such as Walk to School Day, Walking School Bus, etc. Please join the walk and talk the talk by contacting Eugenia Marks at Audubon Society of RI, 949-5454, ext 3003, or emarks@asri.org to discuss International Walk to School Day, October 6. Please register online at www.walktoschool.org/register.

Neighborhood schools appeal not only for a sense of connection but for the opportunity to walk or bike to school. We want to help create a safe environment for walking and biking. We look forward to your joining the action to make it happen.

Yours for walking,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eugenia A. Marks". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Eugenia Marks
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Member, Coalition for Transportation Choices, www.rictc.org