There was a time when the sight of children walking and bicycling to school was a familiar scene in communities across California. In fact, in 1969 approximately 50 percent of children walked or bicycled to school. Today, fewer than 15 percent of children do and rates of childhood obesity and overweight are overwhelming.¹²

Concerns about traffic safety are often cited as one of the main reasons children do not walk or bicycle to school.³ And for good reason, as in 2010 alone, over 21,000 California school children were sent to an emergency department and over 1,500 were hospitalized due to pedestrian or bicycle injuries.⁴

Creating safe opportunities for walking and bicycling is critical to improving the safety of young pedestrians and bicyclists and to reducing overweight and obesity among California’s youth. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs are key to reversing these trends. SRTS programs increase the number of children who safely walk and bicycle to school through education and encouragement programs, enhanced enforcement, engineering improvements, and strong program evaluation.

Program Summary

The City of Delano received a federal SRTS Non-Infrastructure (NI) award to increase safe walking and bicycling to school in Delano Unified School District. The City hired Youth Educational Sports, Inc. (YES, Inc.), a nonprofit bicycling and pedestrian safety organization, to help facilitate and implement its SRTS NI program.
**Implementing Agency**

Youth Educational Sports, Inc.

**Location**

Delano, Kern County  
Caltrans District 6  
CA Assembly District 18  
CA Senate District 30

**Funding**

Federal SRTS Non-Infrastructure – Cycle 2

**Participating Schools**

Albany Park Elementary, Del Vista Elementary, Fremont Elementary, Harvest Elementary, Morningside Elementary, Princeton St. Elementary, Terrace Elementary, Valle Vista Elementary, Almond Tree Middle, La Vina Middle, and Cecil Ave. Middle  
76 to 90 percent of students in participating schools are eligible for the Free and Reduced Price Meals Program

**Contact**

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In a community where students were primarily walking to school by themselves, Yes, Inc. quickly identified the need for pedestrian and bicycle safety education as paramount.

They presented pedestrian and bicycle education programs at all middle and elementary schools within the school district and trained local law enforcement/cadet officers to assist with pedestrian and bicycle rodeos. A Walking Ambassador program was started with Yes, Inc. training and supporting middle school students to escort elementary students in their neighborhood on their way to school on select days.

YES, Inc. also worked closely with the school district to implement large-scale community Walk/Bike to School events in October and May.

**PROGRAM SUCCESSES**

- Program-wide, the number of students walking and bicycling to school increased by 18 percent between 2010 and 2012.
- At Nueva Vista School, where a Walking Ambassador program was implemented, the number of students walking and bicycling to school increased by over 43 percent between 2010 and 2012.
- 7,500 students have received pedestrian and bicycle safety education.

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