SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL SUCCESS STORY

San Marino, California
CALTRANS DISTRICT 7, LOS ANGELES COUNTY

2.5 times more students walking and bicycling to school during the two-week challenge than normal school days.

3,245 total number of walking and bicycling trips logged by students during the two-week challenge.

113,463 total calories burned by students while walking and bicycling to and from school during the two-week challenge.

400 students benefitted from having the Safe Routes to School program at their school.

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.\(^1\)\(^2\)

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

This project is in the beginning stages of implementation, with the goal of reducing vehicular traffic and improving traffic safety.

One part of the federally-funded SRTS award is to establish a program to encourage parents to allow their children to walk and bicycle to school. At the outset of the program, parents and students were surveyed and the results showed that about 44 students at Carver and about 88 students at Valentine routinely walked or bicycled to school.

With the approval by the school board, Carver and Valentine Elementary Schools families were able to test an electronic “scan and notify” system for a two-
week walk/bicycle challenge. The pilot program entailed students registering and being issued a special SRTS Sneaker keychain with a barcode which was to be attached to students’ backpacks. Carver and Valentine Parent-Teacher Association volunteers were involved in this program as well, helping to greet students and scan their keychains.

**PROGRAM SUCCESSES**

- A total of 3,245 total trips were logged during the two-week challenge:
  - 157 students walked or bicycled at least once to Carver Elementary.
  - Over 248 students walked or bicycled at least once to Valentine Elementary.
  - Over 320 students walked or bicycled at least seven of the ten days.
- Students participating in the two-week challenge:
  - Traveled 2,837 miles.
  - Burned an estimated 113,463 calories.
  - Eliminated 3,245 car trips resulting in 2,483 pounds of CO2 not released.