

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 3, 2011

More Kids on the Street

Be on the look-out for kids on the streets this week. Students from elementary to high school will be taking to their feet to mark the beginning of International Walk to School Month in October. Over 100 schools in Nova Scotia will participate in the event, also known as IWALK.

IWALK celebrates the physical activity, safety and environmental benefits of walking and cycling. But there's more to IWALK than that; just ask a few students, like Jonah Tate and his sister Ruby. They attend Shatford Memorial Elementary in Hubbards.

"I like biking to school because it's fun and I get wind going through my hair and don't get sweaty," says Jonah. "I like walk to school events because I get to walk with my cousin Hanna," says Ruby.

Their father, Gord Tate, is sold on the idea of walking to school too. He says, "IWALK reminds us how important celebrating the simple act of walking is to our school community."

But it's not just kids and parents who see the importance of walking to school. More and more, school administration and teachers are recognizing what active forms of transportation can do for learning.

"I know I feel more alert and energized after I ride my bike to work, and I can see that same energy in the faces of my students who choose active transport to get to school," says Pat Cody, the Physical Education teacher at Le Marchant-St. Thomas Elementary in Halifax. "Active students seem calmer, happier and ready to learn before the first bell rings."

Schools or youth-based groups may register at any point during October at www.saferoutesns.ca (click IWALK) and participate for one day, one week or all month long. Bussed schools participate with Walk *at* School events. Registered schools qualify for prize draws including: a bike donated by Cyclesmith; a classroom pedometer kit; reflective arm/leg bands for all students; and a Climate Change Teacher's Guide with an Ecology Action Centre membership.

International Walk to School Month is an initiative of Active & Safe Routes to School (www.saferoutesns.ca), coordinated in Nova Scotia by the Ecology Action Centre in partnership with the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness as part of the Active Kids Healthy Kids Initiative.

"Having worked at a school where 90 percent of the students were bussed and a school where the majority of students walk or wheel to school," explains Cody, "I can safely say that the active students seem more engaged in learning when school opens and they are more involved in the school community."

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For a list of participating schools, go to <http://saferoutesns.ca/index.php/event/october-is-international-walk-to-school-month/>

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