

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, October 8, 2008

Students hit streets & trails for Walk to School Month

Halifax – Today the students at Park West School in Halifax hit the streets and trails. They joined thousands of Canadian schools, including over 100 across Nova Scotia, to celebrate International Walk to School Month kicking off this week.

Park West students, parents and staff were joined on an 8 a.m. walk to school by special guests including MLA Diana Whalen and several candidates for HRM Mayor, Councillor and the School Board. During the event parents were encouraged to leave their cars at home and allow their kids to walk or wheel to school.

“The event highlights the challenges young people have in traveling our streets without a car, challenges similar to those we see at Park West School,” says Janet Barlow with Active & Safe Routes to School of the Ecology Action Centre. She cites a lack of sidewalks and trails, unsafe crossings and speeding cars as just some of the hazards students face on the trip to school. “But there are solutions to these problems; we just need to bring the right folks to the table to solve them.”

Safety is a particular concern of parents at Park West. Its Active & Safe Routes to School Committee aims to make walking and cycling routes to the school safer. Part of its challenge is cutting down on the sheer number of cars driven to school, which pose dangers to students on foot. The parent-led group wants to make trails a safe alternative to dangerous streets. But rough trails that ice over in the winter are a barrier. But where there are barriers, there are also benefits.

“Walk to School Week is a great way for kids to learn how to integrate physical activity into their daily lives”, said Barry Barnet, Minister of Health Promotion and Protection. “It will help them set up a life long approach to active living.”

In addition to the safety and physical activity benefits, walking to school is an environmentally-friendly form of transportation. By leaving cars at home, families reduce tailpipe emission that effect local air quality and contribute to climate change.

International Walk to School Month is organized by Active & Safe Routes to School (ASRTS), coordinated in Nova Scotia by the Ecology Action Centre in partnership with Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection, as part of the Active Kids Healthy Kids initiative. ASRTS encourages students, parents and school staff to walk, bike, in-line skate or use other modes of active transportation in their communities.

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