



April 2014

### Coordinator's Corner

Spring is in full bloom now and it's the perfect time for students to get outdoors walking and biking to school. National Bike to School Day is less than a month away and if you haven't already, be sure to register your school's Bike to School Day event at [WalkBiketoSchool.org](http://WalkBiketoSchool.org).

Not sure about what you can do for Bike to School Day? We've added a new section to the VDOT SRTS website with [links](#), [tip sheets](#), and [resource guides](#) to help plan your event as well as customizable flyers and poster to help spread the word about Bike to School Day. Also, be sure to read about Bikeology, the bicycle safety curriculum for middle school aged students. Incorporating bicycle safety into the classroom is a great way to prepare for Bike to School Day. This curriculum complements the NHTSA pedestrian safety curriculum and is ready-to-use in the classroom.



Earth Day is April 22, and provides a great opportunity for students to connect biking and walking with cleaner air and environmental stewardship. The spring is also a great time to hold outdoor walking and bicycle safety events.

In our Friends and Faces column, we'll hear from Amy Riggio, a PE teacher from Sanders Corner Elementary School in Ashburn who's been keeping her school's Safe Route program strong with monthly Walk to School Days. Learn about the activities her school has participated in and the support she's received from the community.

Read on!

-Rob Williams  
VDOT Safe Routes to School Coordinator

### Friends & Faces

*Amy Riggio is the P.E. teacher at Sanders Corner Elementary School in Ashburn, Virginia. This is her first year at Sanders Corner Elementary and her first year implementing a Safe Routes to School program. The great support she's received from families and the community for her efforts has made continuing the school's Safe Routes to School program next year a must.*

### IN THIS ISSUE

- Coordinator's Corner
- Friends and Faces
- National Bike to School Day
- Bikeology is Here!
- The Saris Poster Contest
- Bike Smart Virginia
- Bridging the Gap Research
- Celebrate Earth Day with SRTS
- Crossing Guard Appreciation Day
- Walkabout Mini-grants are Ready

### CALENDAR

#### APRIL

- 9: Bike Train and Walking School Bus Webinar
- 17: QuickStart Mini-grant applications due
- 22: Earth Day

#### MAY

- 7: National Bike to School Day
- 15: SRTS National Partnership Webinar - SRTS Volunteers, part 1

#### JUNE

- 19: SRTS National Partnership Webinar - SRTS Volunteers, part 2

#### SEPTEMBER

- 8 - 11: Pro Walk Pro Bike Conference
- 15 - 19: Student Travel Tally Week

#### OCTOBER

- 8: International Walk to School Day

Let us know about SRTS events in your community! Click [here](#) to send your information so we can include it in our calendar



Amy Riggio posts the Safe Routes to School Banner at Sanders Corner Elementary School.

### How did you and Sanders Corner Elementary School get involved with SRTS?

Our SRTS School Division Coordinator, Christy Slone, contacted us about applying for a SRTS QuickStart Mini-grant. Right away, our school decided that we wanted to incorporate safety and fitness into our program and this grant was the perfect opportunity.

We applied for and received the Mini-grant to purchase token incentive items to hand out to students that walk, bike, or scooter to school on our monthly walk to school days. The Mini-grant was also used to purchase water bottles, which we used in November for a special walk to school day as an incentive for participating students.

### What SRTS projects has Sanders Corner done this year so far?

Our Sanders Corner Walk to School Day program began in October 2013 with International Walk to School Month and we have held a Walk to School Day (W2School Day) each month this school year so far. Even on the coldest of days, our students, parents and staff have supported this wonderful program. When our students walk to school, they are celebrated for their efforts by earning a shoe token. Our students LOVE the tokens. We have foot tokens and a dolphin token which is our school mascot.

Our November Walk to School Day was a Celebration of past and present. We remembered our wonderful

Principal, Kathy Hwang, who passed away the year prior and we looked ahead to an amazing year filled with fitness and community with our W2School Days! One of our 5th Grade classes created safety videos for the entire school to watch as a lead up to our November Walk to School Day.

### What are the videos like?

The class really took ownership of the project and I am so proud of the hard work they demonstrated. They brainstormed ideas and decided to highlight tunnel safety (which is specific to our school), crosswalk safety, proper clothing for different seasons, and bike and scooter safety. The students choose their topic, wrote their own scripts, organized props and starred in the videos.

You can view all of the videos [here](#).

### How has the community responded to walking and bicycling to school?

The communities in Ashburn are centralized around school and there are great walking paths meant for walking and bicycling to school. There are even tunnels that go underneath busy roads, so children can avoid crossing them. But families were still driving to school.



Students walk at school during a Sanders Corner W2School Day.

Because of our outreach, we have seen a change. On walk to school days, families have embraced walking to school. This is helping the community see that walking can be just as easy and has other benefits. Parents and their children spend more time together, and families get

more opportunities to see and meet other people in their neighborhood.

We have even seen several families come together to support our W2School Day. Instead of taking the bus, the student and families of one bus stop have decided to walk to school together as part of a "Walking School Bus." Other parents also volunteer during walk to school days at school to ensure that all the walking and biking students receive toe tokens.

Local businesses are participating, too, by supporting our W2School Days. The local supermarket donated healthy items, and the nearby Starbucks has offered discounts to teachers that park and walk. The coffee has really helped to motivate teachers to participate.

**What projects do you have planned for the rest of the year?**

Our W2School Days will continue through the school year. Also, we're planning to set up bike, scooter, and pedestrian safety stations during our school's field day this month -- a daylong physical event at the school where students spend all day outside participating activities and games. And next year, we plan to reach out to the local police and fire departments to participate in our SRTS events.

**What would you tell other schools that are interested in starting a Safe Routes program?**

First, I would tell them that it is so SIMPLE!! And Safe Routes to School has GREATLY benefitted the Physical Education program at Sanders Corner, the relationships with the families in the community (getting to know their faces and names better-it's my first year here at Sanders) and the overall school spirit here at Sanders Corner.

### ***Bike Smart Virginia***

A key component of bicycling safely to and from school is to ensure that students are aware of not only the rules of the road, but also how to properly operate a bicycle. Virginia's Bike Smart program offers Bike Smart Basics, a "train the trainers" course that teaches bicycling safety for

elementary, middle, or high school students. The course covers helmet safety, crash avoidance, bicycle handling skills, and rules of the road.

Bike Smart Virginia Schools is a collaborative project between the Virginia Departments of Education, Health and Motor Vehicles and the non-profit organization, Bike Walk Virginia. Schools in twenty divisions in Virginia have adopted Bike Smart as part of their Health and Physical Education Curriculum. For more information about Bike Smart, visit their website.

Interested in teaching bicycling safety to middle or high school students? See the companion article on Bikeology in this issue.

### ***National Bike to School Day is May 7th***



On May 7, thousands of students, parents, teachers, and Safe Routes to School supporters will take part in the third annual National Bike to School Day. Register your school and join the 50 schools in Virginia who have already registered to take part in this national event. Last year 84 schools registered for Bike to School Day, let's try and double it this year!

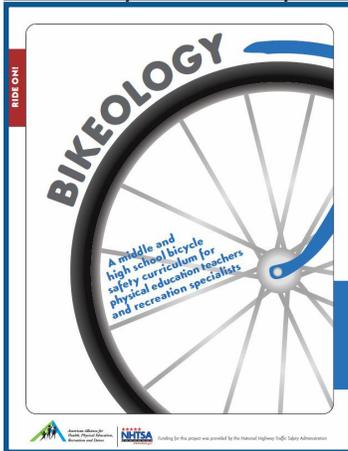
Help spread the word about National Bike to School Day using these great Bike to School Day Flyers, Posters, and Stickers. You can download them on Virginia's Safe Routes

to School Website. You can also find great resources to get ideas for and guides to plan an awesome Bike to School Day at your school!

Hosting a Bicycle Train is a great way to celebrate Bike to School Day, be sure to check out the VDOT Safe Routes to School [Webinar on Bike Trains and Walking School Buses](#).

### ***Bikeology is Here!***

The [National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\)](#) and the [American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance \(AAHPERD\)](#) have developed, [Bikeology](#), a



ready-to-use bicycle safety curriculum for physical education teachers working with middle and high school students.

Unlike Bikesmart, which is a training course for teachers, health advocates and others to learn how to facilitate bicycle safety trainings, Bikeology is a

comprehensive curriculum that trainers can use to teach bicycle safety directly to the students. This curriculum provides the knowledge and resources to implement on-the-bicycle safety lessons. The curriculum also contains the necessary preparations and minimum-level benchmarks to meet when teaching bicycle riding and is suitable for enhancing skill at the recreational biking level. The lessons in the curriculum meet National Standards for K-12 Physical Education and include assessments for the skills to ensure safe bicycling. Additionally, there are detailed instructions for using the curriculum, integrating it into the classroom, and implementing the lesson. There is also a guide that teachers can share with parents that shows how parents can support safe bicycling, and guidance for properly fitting a bicycle and bicycle helmet.

The curriculum is available [online](#).

### ***The Saris Poster Contest***

Elyse Ladia of Greenbriar West Elementary School in Fairfax won the statewide contest and went on to compete with entries from 23 other states for the national prize. Although Elyse's poster didn't win the national prize, she did a great job representing Virginia! See the national winning poster [here](#).



### ***Walkabout Mini-grants are available***

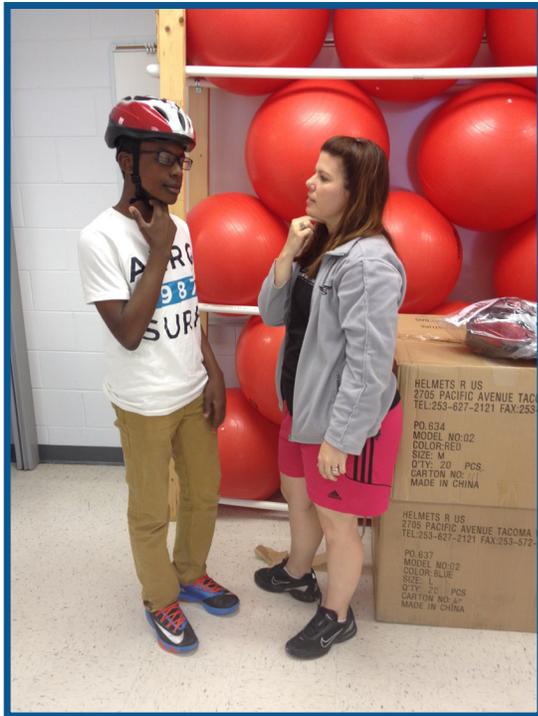
Walkabout Mini-grants are still available for schools in Virginia. A Safe Routes to School Walkabout Mini-grant is a great way to bring together school and community stakeholders to learn about the bicycling and pedestrian environment around a school, share perspectives, and build consensus and identify potential solutions. Schools that participate in Walkabouts receive a brief Walkabout report that includes photos of the school, walking and bicycling conditions in the area, and descriptions of locations to focus improvement. Be sure to apply for a Walkabout Mini-grant online!

### ***QuickStart Mini-grants***

As you can see from the experience at Sanders Corners Elementary School, QuickStart Mini-grants are a great way for a school to get a small Safe Routes to School project off the ground. All elementary and middle schools in Virginia are eligible to apply.

With over a hundred grants awarded to date, you'll find lots of great ideas for a QuickStart Mini-grant for your school. In March, six schools received QuickStart Mini-grants:

- Oakridge Elementary School PTA- WTSD/BTSD incentive items, Bike Safety training
- Olde Creek Elementary PTA- BTSD incentive items, safety vests, advertising signs and slow down signs
- Minnick School- bicycles, helmets, bicycle tools
- TrailsforYouth.Org and Lynbrook Elementary School- bicycle rodeo and bicycle safety equipment
- WJCC Public Schools- bicycle rodeos, incentive items, bike rodeos
- Buzz Aldrin Elementary School PTA- crossing guard assistance, reflective incentive items



Elizabeth Davis Middle School used a Mini-grant for a helmet giveaway during their wellness night.

The Spring cycle for QuickStart Mini-grants is closed, but check back this summer for the Fall QuickStart Mini-grant application! In the meantime, visit the [VDOT SRTS website](#) to get ideas for a project at your school!

### **Celebrate Earth Day with SRTS**

Every April 22 people from around the world come together to celebrate Earth Day and show their support to improve the environment. The Virginia SRTS Program is celebrating Earth Day 2014 by releasing a new resource called "Going Green with SRTS," which provides strategies that local SRTS programs can use to highlight the environmental benefits of walking and bicycling to school

Click [here](#) to check out this new resource!

### **Research finds SRTS students are more active**



Students at Mountain View Elementary School keep active while wearing pedometers purchased with a Safe Routes QuickStart Mini-grant. .

Bridging the Gap, a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation research program that explores the policies and environmental factors that influence diet, physical activity and obesity among youth has recently released a research brief linking Safe Routes to School with higher rates of Student Active travel. View or download the report [here](#).

