



City of Gahanna, Department of Parks & Recreation
200 S. Hamilton Rd. Gahanna, Ohio 43230 - 614.342.4250 - www.gahanna.gov

PRESS RELEASE

October 1, 2009

October is Walk To School Month! *Jefferson, Lincoln Elementary schools plan Walking School Buses*

Gahanna, Ohio - Jefferson and Lincoln Elementary Schools in Gahanna will be joining schools from around Ohio, the nation and the world to celebrate International Walk to School Month in October, with help from Walk to School Grants from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the City of Gahanna.

The month's activities will culminate with Walking School Bus Days, when students, families, staff and community members will walk to school to promote safety, wellness and increased physical activity. The Walking School Buses are scheduled on Wednesday, October 21st for Lincoln Elementary School, and Thursday, October 22 for Jefferson Elementary School. Maps with the walking and biking routes will be posted on the City of Gahanna and school websites the first full week of October.

Other awareness and education activities throughout October include a Walk to School poster contest and bicycle clinic, in which students and their families learn safe cycling habits and practice common maneuvers.

In the U.S., International Walk to School Day is expected to include 5,000 schools from all 50 states. Walkers from the U.S. will join children and adults in 40 countries around the world. Over 2,200 schools have registered their Walk to School Programs on the International Walk To School in the USA website, 116 schools from Ohio.

These events are part of each school's Safe Routes to School Travel Plan, which were completed during the 2008-09 school year by Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation through an Ohio Safe Routes to School grant. Walk to School events work to create safer routes for walking and bicycling and emphasize the importance of issues such as increasing physical activity among children, pedestrian safety, traffic congestion, concern for the environment and building connections between families, schools and the broader community.

The events are being organized by school staff, PTO/PTAs at each school and the Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation's Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) with assistance from the Gahanna Police Department. For additional local information, please contact Kate Moening, Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation at 614-342-4250 or kate.moening@gahanna.gov.



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About International Walk to School Day

- Walk to School Day was established in the United States in 1997 by the *Partnership for a Walkable America*. Canada and Great Britain already had walk to school programs in place. In 2000, these three countries joined together to create International Walk to School Day.
- In May 2006, the National Center for Safe Routes to School was established to assist communities in enabling and encouraging children to safely walk and bike to school.
- The National Center for Safe Routes to School serves as the national coordinating agency for Walk to School activities in the USA.
- Today, more than 5,000 schools in the USA participate in International Walk to School Day. Nearly 4 million people participate in approximately 40 countries as part of International Walk to School.
- Walk to School Day began as a simple idea - children and parents, school and local officials walking to school together on a designated day. It is an energizing event, reminding everyone of the simple joy of walking to school, the health benefits of regular daily activity, and the need for safe places to walk and bike. Schools focus on health, safety, physical activity and concern for the environment.
- Organizations supporting International Walk to School Day in the U.S. include America Walks, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Highway Administration, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the National Center for Bicycling and Walking, the National Center for Safe Routes to School, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Safe Kids Worldwide, and the Safe Routes to School National Partnership.

For additional information, please visit these Web sites:

International Walk to School in the USA

www.walktoschool.org

National Center for Safe Routes to School

www.saferoutesinfo.org

International Walk to School

www.iwalktoschool.org

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