



**SafeRoutes**



## **MEDIA ALERT**

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Thompson Middle School Students Poised to Take the  
**Bike and Walk Challenge**  
Beginning Monday, October 27, 2014  
Supported by the National Center for Safe Routes to School

### **Celebrate Kids Moving in the Morning!**

Children who start the day by walking or biking to school are engaged in the physical activity that contributes to a healthier lifestyle, a better outlook, higher self-esteem, improved independence, and, ultimately, better performance in school.

This year, students at Newport's Thompson Middle School will have the chance to log their biking and walking days during two Bike and Walk Challenges – one in the fall and one in the spring, both funded by the National Center for Safe Routes to School.

The official launch of the Fall Bike and Walk Challenge will take place on Monday, October 27, as Thompson students arrive to school at the rear courtyard on Central Street, from 7:15 – 8:00am.

Thompson's principal, Jaime Crowley, hopes the program will inspire more students to join the ranks of the active. "By launching the Challenge we are aiming to both support the existing core of regular walkers and bikers and grow their numbers. Getting up, out and moving before the school day supports physical health, cognitive function and a sense of independence. It also lays the foundation for very positive lifelong habits."

"What better time of year to be out in the morning than the fall?" asks James Underwood, the program's official Greeter. Mr. Underwood will be on hand every morning for the students to check in and claim their raffle tickets. "The kids can breathe the cool autumn air and appreciate being outside of a car or a bus. And the prizes aren't half bad either. It's going to be very rewarding to see more of them biking and walking and enjoying the experience."

Students who bike or walk will be eligible for a range of prizes including apparel, backpacks, walk and bike accessories, gift certificates, cold weather gear, bike locks, and more. Three grand prizes of \$250 each will be awarded to the three students who log the most days. Two

trophies – a golden helmet and a golden sneaker - will travel weekly to the class with the most students participating in the challenge.

Additionally, data collected will help the school to determine ways to improve, encourage, and support active transportation - biking and walking to school – in the best interest of youth health and productivity. Tracking student participation may also indicate how biking and walking can help improve attendance and timely arrivals.

Parents and community members can help by encouraging students to bike and walk to school when possible, and to be extremely aware and cautious as drivers at all times, especially during school arrival and dismissal hours.

The Thompson Middle School Safe Routes to School program is administered by Bike Newport. The local bicycle advocacy organization is working with the City, Schools, and Police Department to improve the safety of all road users in Newport through education and advocacy. Mark Chesterton, Bike Newport's Director of Education, reminds all residents, "It's up to all of us to support our youth in their efforts to be more active. Please be aware and cautious on the roads at all times, especially during school arrival and dismissal hours. Drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians need to pay attention, follow the laws, and be aware of one another at all times. That's what we teach our students, and that's what we need from every road user."

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For more information on the correlation between physical activity and school performance:

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/physical-activity-may-help-kids-do-better-in-school-studies-say/2013/10/21/e7f86306-2b87-11e3-97a3-ff2758228523\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/physical-activity-may-help-kids-do-better-in-school-studies-say/2013/10/21/e7f86306-2b87-11e3-97a3-ff2758228523_story.html)

<http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2013/Educating-the-Student-Body-Taking-Physical-Activity-and-Physical-Education-to-School.aspx>