



SAFE ROUTE NEWS

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Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

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Bicycle Rodeos Angela Olson SD SRTS Coordinator

Last Saturday my husband, Scott and I went on our first bike ride of 2010. Remember me—the one that is just learning to really ride? (see “Confessions of a Terrified Bike Rider” June 09) Our little bike adventure took place on LaFramboise Island in Pierre.

Part of the fun of the bike trails at LaFramboise Island is the off road experience of sharp turns and dodging fallen trees and tree stumps. For me it takes a bit of concentration to maneuver through this little path but for my husband it is second nature and he can ride it with speed.

The trees overhead create shadows and brief seg-

ments of blinding sunshine which adds to the off road experience. This combination of shadows and light, sharp turns and tree stumps led to me being dethroned from my bike and my shin meeting up with one of those tree stumps. I found Scott waiting for me down the trail a bit wondering what was keeping me, it was almost with pride that I showed him my battle wounds. With pride because I got back up on my bike without hesitation-I loved the trail!

After our ride we decided to walk the same trail we had just ridden and find the spot that dethroned me. This walking perspective was completely different, the S curve wasn't as curvy

as I remembered it being and the logs on the other side of the trail were not as close to the stump as I had thought. Scott told me that next time we went for a ride we would go back to that spot and take that curve over and over until it felt second nature to me and we would do the same with any other segment of the trail I was uncomfortable with.

The month of May tends to be the start of many of the Bike Rodeos that take place around the country. I wonder how much different my bike experience growing up would have been if I had attended Bike Rodeos where I would have learned various bicycling skills and gained (cont. page 2)

Dates to Remember:

Registration is now open for International Walk to School 2010. This year's iwalk takes place on October 6, 2010.



The Evaluation Component of SRTS National SRTS

Evaluation is an important component of any SRTS program. Evaluation is used to determine if the aim of the strategies are being met and to assure that resources are directed toward efforts that show the greatest likelihood of success. Also, evaluation

can identify needs adjustments to the program while it is underway.

Every SRTS program, no matter the size, can benefit from evaluation. For local programs evaluation allows for:

•**Making sure that the**

underlying problem is identified so that proper strategies to address the problem are picked. Sometimes a SRTS program begins without a good understanding of underlying issues resulting in a less successful (cont. page 2)

Bike Rodeos cont. from page 1

the confidence I have been so lacking in.

Bike Rodeos can play a significant part in a child's bicycling experience and should be viewed as an asset to all SRTS programs.

For those communities that do not hold a yearly Bike Rodeo I would like to challenge you to hold a Bike Rodeo in the near future.

What is a Bike Rodeo? The main focus of a bike rodeo is to teach cycling safety to kids. This can take on various forms and can last from a couple of hours on a Saturday morning to several sessions during a week.

Generally a 10-15 minute segment of the rodeo is spent on a safety and rules of the road lecture, followed by a

hands on experience where the child rides his/her bike through a skills course and they practice what they learned in the lecture.

The skills course can be a chalk outline of streets, intersections and drive-ways with cardboard cars and buses. The children are taken through this course with an experienced adult bicyclist that can give out pointers about safety and rules of the road to reinforce what they learned in the lecture.

The skills that should be learned on this skills course are:

- Signaling
- Scanning for traffic without weaving
- Maneuvering
- Balance

- Braking
- Rules of the road

Various "stations" can and should be included in this activity. The helmet fitting stations should be of highest priority. South Dakota Emergency Medical Services for Children has a great program called "[Don't Thump your Melon.](#)" (DTYM) This program includes a [Bike Rodeo instruction manual](#), free helmets, and T-shirts.

Bicycle inspection and bicycle registration stations should also be included.

Bicycle inspections are a learning opportunity for the child and parent to look for safety issues with the bike and includes brakes, chains, wheels, frame, saddle (cont. on page 3)

The Evaluation Component of SRTS cont. from page 1

program.

•**Setting reasonable expectations about what the program can do.** By knowing the starting point, SRTS programs can set specific and reasonable objectives.

•**Identifying changes that will improve the program.** Part of evaluation is monitoring what happens throughout the life of a project so that mid-course corrections can be made, if needed, to improve chances of success.

•**Determining if the program is having the desired results.** This is a primary purpose of any evaluation and can be used to inform funding sources, the media, and the public to help build support for SRTS.

There are benefits that extend beyond an individual program. Data collected and shared by local programs can influence future funding at the local, state and national level. Today's SRTS exists in part because of the

evaluations of earlier programs. In 1970's Odense, Denmark, initiated SRTS efforts to combat the high rate of pedestrian and bicyclist injuries. Over a 20-year period, the number of injured school children in Odense decreased by 30-40 percent. That success helped lead to the establishment of SRTS programs in the U.S –first in the Bronx in New York City, then Congressionally-funded pilot programs in Arlington, MA, and Marin County, CA, and then state-level programs in Texas and California, as well as others. Evaluation of the success of those early programs in increasing walking and bicycling to school spurred Congress to establish the National Safe Routes to School Program in 2005.

Findings from evaluations conducted by local programs will play a similarly important role when policymakers at the national, state, and local levels decide whether and how to continue SRTS.

More information on the purpose of evaluation can be found on the [National SRTS website](#) along with the following pages:

When and How to Evaluate: SRTS evaluation plans come in different sizes and shapes to fit different program goals, strategies and resources. This section provides an overview of the times during a SRTS program when evaluation occurs and then provides two evaluation plan options based on those times

Collecting SRTS Information: This section describes the types, of information collected and the methods for collecting it.

Evaluation in Six Steps: A six step process for conducting an evaluation is described in detail. Includes a downloadable worksheet for program implementers.

Resources: For readers interested in developing a better understanding of evaluation.

Bicycle Rodeos cont. from page 2

adjustment, crank assembly, and handle bar checks. Children can be taught to check their own bikes for safety issues and make minor adjustments if needed.

Amazing community ideas: Not all children have access to a bicycle. The City of Hartford had a community wide activity where they gathered unused or abandoned bikes and took them to the Mike Durfee State Prison in Springville. There the bikes were refurbished as part of a program called "Pedal Power From The Pen". These bikes were then taken back to

Hartford to be used by those children that did not have a bicycle.

One community in Illinois holds a 16 week after school program (Bicycling Ambassadors) for middle school students with eight weeks spent on mechanics and eight weeks spent on traffic cycling education and presentation skills. Some of these kids are hired by the parks department to do peer to peer bike safety education with kids.

Feeling a little overwhelmed? The following resources can help you out:

- Bicycle Life

- Don't Thump Your Melon
- SRTS Bike Rodeo Manual
- An Organizer's Guide to Bicycle Rodeos
- The list goes on, Google Bike Rodeo!

Ask your locale Law Enforcement, bicycle shop, Kiwanis Club, bicycle club, safety committee, health affiliates and other interested individuals/clubs to volunteer, this can be a fun community activity. Ask for lots of help!

If your community has had successful events, email me with details and pictures and I'll share in future newsletters. Have fun!

Alternative Drop-Off Angela Olson SD SRTS Coordinator

From reading parent surveys I see that some parents do not see SRTS as a program that their children will ever be able to participate in. In circumstances where children are bused or driven to school due to distance issues alternative drop off sites are one solution.

These sites serve two purposes; It gives more children the opportunity for physical activity, and reduces traffic congestion around the schools making the perimeter around the schools safer for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Alternative drop off sites should be chosen for their ability to safely accommodate the number of children dropped off and have appropriate and safe infrastructure to handle walking and biking to school. These locations should also include walking school buses to escort the children to school.

Alternative drop off locations typically used are church parking lots, parks, or less traveled neighborhoods. A statement from the owner of the property or the neighborhood stating they agree to allow this project is required. Children riding in school buses that participate in this program must also

have written permission from their parents.

Some schools support a program called "the morning mile." This also allows those children that are bused or driven the opportunity to walk a mile before school or during recess within the safety of the school playground or around the perimeter of the school building.

These options allow for all children to participate in walking programs regardless of where they live and helps them understand the importance of physical activity in their daily lives.

Sites of Interest

SD SRTS

<http://www.sddot.com/srts/>

International Walk to School

<http://www.walktoschool-usa.org/>

South Dakota School's Walk

<http://doe.sd.gov/oess/schoolhealth/sdwalks/index.asp>

Pick-Up and Drop-Off Toolkit

http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/dropoff_pickup/index.cfm

SRTS Highlights

America Walks is a nonprofit organization that leads in a national coalition of local advocacy groups dedicated to promoting walkable communities. America Walks provides a web-based, online support network for local pedestrian advocacy groups. This website includes webinars focusing on SRTS issues. These webinars are free and are designed to educate parents, students, teachers, agency staff, community members, professionals and other interested parties about SRTS. Back issues of these webinars are available. I would highly recommend these webinars for those interested in SRTS.





Recently I offered my brother a piece of chocolate cake, his response—"no, it will undo all the effort of my seven mile run this morning." My brother loves food and eats well but he understands the balancing act of caloric intake and physical activity. He not only understands this but lives by it as he makes food choices. If he splurges on ice-cream and pie he makes up for it in exercise. My brother is closing in on 60 and is in amazing shape.

Look closely at the billboards.. One

Calorie Perspective *Angela Olson, SD SRTS Coordinator*

reads "Childhood obesity, don't take it lightly." "Eat fruits and vegetables and be active." The McDonalds sign reads "my kinda shoppin spree."

Our children face these mixed messages every day. What our kids aren't taught in these messages is to put things into perspective. Junk food is something they want to eat and it's nearly impossible to keep kids from it.

The focus with the SRTS program is physical activity and safety but I understand very well the effect of caloric intake.

Last Fall my husband and I walked a 1/2 marathon in under 3 hours. Out of curiosity I Googled a [walking calorie calculator](#) and found I had burned off approximately 1,000 calories during this event! But to put this in prospective it doesn't take much even on the dollar menu to end up with an 800 calorie meal, splurge with a Big Mac value meal and you can easily take in 1,170 calories, more than the calories I burned off by walking a 1/2 marathon.

I'm not trying to pick on McDonald's or any other fast food place. High calorie high fat meals can be found everywhere including in our own freezers and pantries. With the average American only walking about 5,000 steps a day (about 2 miles) it's easy to see why we are struggling as a nation with our weight.

Back to those billboards. Did you notice that the model on both billboards is the same woman? It sort of represents to me what is happening in our lives. We want to support eating fruits and vegetables and exercise and we talk about doing it but in reality we end up in the drive-thru way more than we should.

Next time I have a big piece of chocolate cake or am tempted to go to the drive-thru, I really need to put it into perspective. Is what I'm putting in my mouth worth having to walk a 1/2 marathon or run seven miles to work it off?

I don't think so!

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

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Where it's safe, get kids
walking and biking.
Where it's not safe,
make it safe.

July/August Newsletter Will Included:

Pick-Up and Drop-Off Issues
SRTS: Options Without Applying
Round 3 Application Highlights

Please send pictures and news articles of your Safe Routes to School activities to: angela.olson@state.sd.us

Article ideas, comments and questions are also welcomed

