

September 30, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Nebraska's Kids Encouraged to Walk, Bike to School Oct. 8**

### *International Walk to School Day Promotes Healthier Lifestyles in Kids*

Join children and adults around the world this Oct. 8 in celebrating International Walk to School Day.

Nebraska schoolchildren and parents can join along with kids at more than 5,000 U.S. schools and 40 nations by walking to school to promote a healthier lifestyle. Walking to school is a great way to be part of a global event to promote health, to identify safer routes for walking or biking and to improve air quality.

Parents, educators and community leaders are encouraged to help celebrate International Walk to School Day by organizing an event in their community where walkers can meet to walk together along safe routes Oct. 8.

The Safe Routes Nebraska Web site, [www.SafeRoutesNE.com](http://www.SafeRoutesNE.com), has great resources for schools and communities, including ideas about how to create meaningful events and links to the National Walk to School program. The site also allows those participating in International Walk to School Day to register their event and find out what other schools are participating in Walk to School Day programs in the United States.

Walk to School events are designed to create safer routes for walking and bicycling and to emphasize the importance of issues including the continuing need to increase children's physical activity, pedestrian safety, traffic congestion, concern for the environment and building connections between families, schools and the broader community.

Parents can also take individual steps to encourage a healthier lifestyle by walking with their child to school on International Walk to School Day. Walking to school with children is not only an ideal way to kick-start a healthier lifestyle; it's also a great way to start the day.

The 2008 event marks the 12<sup>th</sup> International Walk to School Day. What started with one school in Chicago has grown to almost 4 million participants across the globe.

#MORE#

Statewide Walk to School events are conducted as part of Safe Routes Nebraska, which is a part of the National Safe Routes to School Program. Through the 2005 passage of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy of Users, Congress designated \$612 million toward developing the National Safe Routes to School Program. Money is distributed to the Nebraska Department of Roads to fund education, planning and implementation of Safe Routes to School plans and programs.

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