

walk

BY WENDY LANDMAN

New Curriculum a Big Step for Safe Routes to School!

With the creation of 15 innovative lesson plans for Massachusetts teachers that focus on walking, WalkBoston has taken a major step toward the vision of a comprehensive, statewide Safe Routes to School [SRTS] initiative.

For more than five years, WalkBoston has conducted its popular SRTS programs at a total of 12 eastern Massachusetts schools. WalkBoston's program was the first in New England to promote walking and bicycling as keys to health benefits for children.

WalkBoston has now created a curriculum for all elementary school teachers statewide who want to help children learn about the connections between walking, health and environmental quality, whether or not their school is operating a walk-to-school program.

The SRTS Curriculum serves two important purposes:

- It teaches students—in ways that are fun, stimulating and relevant to their lives—how walking is good for their bodies and good for the environment.
- Every lesson plan satisfies at least two requirements of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks Standards for subjects such as Science, Math, Social Science and Comprehensive Health.

The classroom and field activities focus on concepts such as the correlation between walking, personal and community health, Earth and life science, and even global warming.



Previous Program Manager Don Eunson reviews walking safety with third-graders at the Hurley School in the South End.

WalkBoston created the curriculum [download available at www.walkboston.org] with the support of an EPA Healthy Communities Grant and in collaboration with ERG, Inc. Linda Stein of ERG spent more than a year creating the lesson plans, which were tested in classrooms—with outstanding results. One teacher commented, “This lesson [What Color is My Air Today?] fits perfectly into the curriculum requirements... It's teacher/student-friendly. Learning about air quality and the Air Quality Index was a big hit with students who now want to check the paper daily to see the index.”

WalkBoston also created the statewide SRTS “toolkit” being distributed and used by parents and school administrators to establish their own SRTS programs. [download at www.walkboston.org]

Meanwhile, as funding mechanisms continue to take shape for state and federal SRTS, WalkBoston—in partnership with the Boston Public Health Commission—is operating successful programs in three Boston schools. At the Hurley School, students are learning how much fun it is to track walking distances with a pedometer. At the O'Hearn School, students are forming a Walking Club to explore and learn about their neighborhood, its history, culture and architecture. At the Dever School—a late-start school—students can go to and from school in a “Walking School Bus,” and the adult-supervised before-school program will provide physical fitness activities and a light snack for students who arrive early.

BY DOROTHEA HASS

Statewide funding for SRTS

In 2005, WalkBoston partnered with Representative Anne Paulsen, the National Park Service, and MassBike to assess the “State of SRTS” and create a comprehensive statewide program. Rep. Paulsen sponsored legislation to secure funding, which is now being considered by the Joint Ways & Means Committee. WalkBoston is working with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation [EOT] and the State Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Board to provide input on the program design, [continued]

Boston

MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES
MORE WALKABLE

SPRING 2006

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF WALKBOSTON

Please join us on **March 30th for our annual celebration** of WalkBoston's continued progress in making cities in Massachusetts more walkable!

The celebration will kick off with a walk along the Rose Kennedy Greenway to explore the area's history and development plans—including parks, pedestrian paths, sidewalks and other facilities. **The walk begins at 4pm** at the North Station ① Causeway Street.

We will convene at WilmerHale [60 State Street] at **5:30pm for our Annual Meeting/celebration**. WalkBoston has much to celebrate because 2005 was a very strong year for us and, with your help, 2006 will be as well! Our guest speaker is Barnaby Evans, the extraordinarily gifted creator of “WaterFire” in Providence, RI. He will share his wonderful ideas about how

art and walking complement each other.

The annual Golden Shoe awards presentations are always an exciting part of the evening. Each year, we honor individuals and organizations that have been instrumental in promoting and/or advocating for a more walkable environment.

The 2006 Golden Shoe award recipients are:

- Mass. Environmental Policy Act Office [MEPA]
- South Cove Community Health Center
- Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center
- Chris Hart [Adaptive Environments]
- Ken Kruckemeyer [Transportation Strategist]

I look forward to sharing this special evening with our members and friends!

Liz Levin

WalkBoston promotes walking for transportation, health and recreation through education and advocacy. Our mission is to create and preserve safe walking environments that build vital communities.

mission

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calendar

Thur. March 30: Annual Celebration-Greenway Walk: 4pm @ N. Station T Celebration: 5:30 @ 60 State St. [walk is free, celebration \$15 sugg.]

See our website and mailings, or call for more details on these upcoming walks. Preregister: 617.367.9255, info@walkboston.org.

Sat. April 22: Walk the Mystic River in Somerville, Everett and Medford and see the paths being built along the river at the Amelia Earhart Dam.

Wed. April 26: The Mystic-Minuteman Connection Trace plans to connect Mystic River and Minuteman paths, linking Alewife to Boston Harbor.

Sat. May 6: The Promise of the River explores the future of the Mystic river in renewing Medford.

Sat. May 13: Explore Roxbury's Revolutionary War Forts — those that kept the British at bay in 1776.

Sat. May 20: Find the Gems of the Emerald Necklace from the Public Garden to Franklin Park, ramble along the fabled 6-mile walking route.

Wed. May 24: Explore Charles Street, the Flat Part of Beacon Hill and MGH, using loop walks created for visitors and employees of MGH.

Sat. June 10: Boston Tops A look at the corbels, cornices and spires of our fabulous rooftops.

Sat. June 17: Brookline's Secret Stairways and Paths A scenic, energizing walk through the pedestrian system serving the town.

Wed. June 28: Stepping Out: The Downtown Boston Entertainment District A tour of its famous venues, actors, comedians and dancers.

Greenway update

WalkBoston's advocacy at 500 Atlantic Avenue succeeded. With strong support from the MA Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, an agreement was worked out with the developer, the BRA, WalkBoston and MoveMass for a 7-foot sidewalk. Later, traffic counts will determine if the curb lane can become a dropoff/pickup lane to re-gain a wider sidewalk and trees. The EOEA opinion requires future Greenway developers to comply with official sidewalk guidelines; directs the City to establish a process for public review prior to permitting; and commits EOEA to elevate pedestrian issues during environmental review. Final details of the design and review process are being worked out. Of 92 support letters, many were from our members. You strengthened our hand, and we thank you.

happiness

Jan. 15, 2006 New York Times article about Daniel Gilbert, Professor of Psychology at Harvard "...a single big payoff—a fat raise, a Hermes Kelly bag, a hot cha cha date—affects people's essential happiness much less than a routine of small delights. And Dr. Gilbert for one is sold. He has found, for example, that one of the best things about being at Harvard is not the prestige of his position, but the fact that he can walk to work from his house in Cambridge."

From the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs certificate, 12/9/05 — "In any MEPA review, I will apply the fundamental principle that public use of this special corridor... must be satisfied before private uses are addressed."

membership application

Complete this form & mail along with your check made payable to:
WalkBoston, Old City Hall, 45 School Street, Boston, MA 02108.
T: 617.367.9255 | F: 617.367.9285 | info@walkboston.org | www.walkboston.org

name(s) _____

address _____

phone: daytime _____ evening _____

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individual/family levels: SUSTAINING \$500—\$5000 DUAL/FAMILY \$50
 SUPPORTER \$100—\$499 INDIVIDUAL \$30
 FRIEND \$65

corporate levels: RACEWALKER \$5000 STROLLER \$1000
 STRIDER \$2500 AMBLER \$400

Your donation is tax deductible as a charitable contribution.

Statewide [continued]

implementation and assessment. **Your calls to Joint Ways and Means Committee in support of the pending funding legislation will make a difference!** [House 617.722.2380, Senate 617.722.1481]

\$1.6 million of funding for statewide SRTS programs was approved in 2005 as part of the Federal transportation bill. Both Federal and State monies will be used to fund public safety infrastructure [bike lanes, crosswalks, enhanced walk signals].

WalkBoston is trying to persuade Executive Office of Transportation that the most effective use of these funds is for "in-school walk-to-school" training of teachers and parents.

physical activity

The American Heart Association recommends children participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily. It notes: "Increased physical activity is associated with an increased life expectancy and decreased risk of cardiovascular disease." Other benefits include: weight control, reduced blood pressure, raised HDL [good] cholesterol, reduced risk of diabetes/cancers, and increased self-confidence/esteem.

Research shows that inactive children become inactive adults. AHA advises reducing sedentary time [e.g., watching TV, playing video games or phone time], and parents be role models for active lifestyles and provide opportunities for increased physical activity.