

## **California Kids' Plates Program**

### **Final Report for 2013-2015 Projects**

#### **Overview/Goals**

The State and Local Injury Control Section, Safe and Active Communities Branch (SACB), California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is charged with overseeing and administering the portion of the Child Health and Safety Funds reserved for unintentional childhood injury prevention, garnered from the sale of specialized motor vehicle license plates.

The Kids' Plates "Paving the Way for Safe Routes to School (SRTS)" projects, awarded for 2013-2015, developed, implemented, and evaluated small-scale, low-cost educational interventions with underserved California schools to improve conditions for walking and bicycling to and from campuses. The goal was to reduce the number of childhood pedestrian and bicycle-related injuries among school-aged children. However, because this is difficult to demonstrate within a two-year timeframe, especially if before the intervention few children in the targeted schools are walking or bicycling due to dangerous conditions, the short-term goal was to build interest and capacity to conduct year-round interventions to improve safety for walking and bicycling in the neighborhoods surrounding school campuses.

#### **The Projects**

The Kids' Plates "Paving the Way for Safe Routes to School" project funding was awarded to four organizations representing the Northern, Central, and Southern regions of California:

1. WalkSacramento (Northern Region) – worked with selected elementary and Kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup> grade (K-8) schools in Amador, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, and Yuba counties;
2. Safe Kids California (Northern Region) – worked with selected elementary and K-8 schools and in Amador, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, and Yuba counties;
3. Monterey County Department of Health (Central Region) – worked with selected elementary schools in the cities of Seaside and Marina in Monterey County; and
4. Escondido Union School District (Southern Region) – worked with selected elementary and middle schools in Escondido in San Diego County.

#### **Process Evaluation Summary**

The following highlights activities, events, trainings, and participants reached as a result of the work conducted by the four Kids' Plates "Paving the Way for Safe Routes to School" two-year projects:

- A total of 31 project staff were responsible for the implementation of all project activities, including walk audits, educational training, resource creation, and data collection and reporting. Project staff were also assisted by multiple subcontractors with specific skills that enhanced the quality, range and depth of provided services.

- More than 7,500 kindergarten through high school students and over 900 adults/non-students participated in educational trainings.
- About 12,000 kindergarten through high school students and approximately 1,800 adults/non-students participated in project events such as Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day.
- Over 120,000 project promotional or educational materials were distributed.

### **Outcome Evaluation Summary**

The following is a list of outcomes as recorded during the two-year period of Kids' Plates "Paving the Way for Safe Routes to School" projects:

- All projects saw an increase in the percentage of parents who responded that their child's school strongly encourages or encourages walking and bicycling to/from school.
- All projects reported an improvement in school, community, and decision-maker knowledge and support for SRTS and other programs, activities, and strategies to increase walkability/bikeability and improve safety for all transportation users.
- All projects reported new and strengthened community-wide partnerships in support of project goals. This was made manifest by the establishment of such things as SRTS committees, parent and safety patrols, neighborhood watch programs, and parent led walking school buses and bicycle trains.
- The WalkSacramento and Safe Kids California projects reported that walk audits were a major accomplishment of their work because they captured community concerns around walking and biking that led directly to safety improvement recommendations made to schools, the community, school districts, and local public works departments.
- Data from Walk Sacramento and Safe Kids California walk audit reports has been incorporated into four funding applications, including three to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), for SRTS infrastructure improvements around four of the eight schools. Two of the four applications have already been awarded funding which will directly result in sidewalk improvements next to one elementary school, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including a crossing median island, in close proximity to another elementary school.
- The Escondido Union School District project used their walk audit reports to create a prioritization list of needed infrastructure improvements at project schools.
- The Monterey County Department of Health project reported that across project schools steps were taken to improve school traffic safety procedures to help deter unsafe driving and promote pedestrian safety. Examples include installation of traffic signs and modified student drop-off procedures.
- The Escondido Union School District project developed standardized guidelines for their Student Safety Patrol and Crossing Guard programs that will continue to be used throughout the school district. They also began implementing Walk and Bike Safety Lessons in classroom lesson plans throughout the district.
- The Monterey County Department of Health project reported that the City of Seaside approved a proposal by the local SRTS committee to schedule a 2016

speed study to determine if a reduction in school zone speed limits is warranted in the City's schools.

- More than three million dollars in actual or pending infrastructure and programmatic funding was leveraged as a result of work conducted by the four Kids' Plates "Paving the Way for Safe Routes to School" projects.
- The WalkSacramento and SafeKids California projects created unique Walking and Biking Program Guides for each school to enhance sustainability beyond the Kids Plates funding period.
- All projects reported that they plan to continue efforts beyond the end of their Kid's Plates "Paving the Way for Safe Routes to School" contracts.

### **Resources Produced**

Please visit <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/Pages/KidsPlates.aspx> for materials produced by the "Paving the Way for Safe Routes to School" projects.

### **Challenges**

A major challenge reported by the projects was school leadership and staff turnover. This is an important item to note because turnover requires a new investment in time and resources to retrain, reeducate, and garner support for project activities, all of which have potential to cause delays in meeting project goals, objectives, and timelines.

### **Conclusions**

The Kid's Plates "Paving the Way for Safe Routes to School" projects reported that their greatest accomplishments were changes in processes, policies, attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs in their respective communities. These results and long-range investments in leveraged funding for educational and infrastructure interventions will have lasting impact on their respective communities for years to come in terms of potential for preventing injuries, continuing to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, and making walking and bicycling more viable transportation options for their young people.