

## THE PEP TOOLBOX PROMISING PRACTICE

### Summary

Competition in which students are motivated to walk to school every day instead of being driven. Children collect stamps for every time they walk to school and can win a prize when they have collected a certain number of stamps. The programme has a positive effect on schools and their communities in terms of the number of students walking to school, avoided greenhouse gas emissions and traffic safety.

### General description of the promising practice

Project title	Motivating pupils to walk and cycle to school: IWALK Club, which is part of the larger transportation initiative Active & Safe Routes To School (ASRTS)
Under the auspices of	Green Communities Association
Funding	Active 2010 Communities in Action Fund (Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion), Moving on Sustainable Transportation (Transport Canada)
Start date	Since 2004 (programme model started in 1997)
End date	Ongoing
Coordinating partner	Jacky Kennedy, Green Communities Canada
Contact details	Jacky Kennedy Green Communities Canada PO Box 928 Peterborough, ON K9J 7A5, Canada Email: info@saferoutestoschool.ca
Other partners involved (optional)	Eighteen community organizations promoted the IWalk Club at their local schools and fit the program within their existing activities (partners not listed here, but organizations include: county public health units, ecology centres, environment networks, the police, transportation and planners, school districts etc.)
More details can be found	<a href="http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca">www.saferoutestoschool.ca</a>
Other relevant links	<a href="http://www.greencommunitiescanada.org">www.greencommunitiescanada.org</a> <a href="http://www.walk21.com">www.walk21.com</a> <a href="http://www.iwalktoschool.org">www.iwalktoschool.org</a>

### Intervention description

The issue	Many parents believe that driving their children to school is the safest, most convenient way of getting them there. An increasing dependency on car travel is directly correlated to a decrease in daily physical activity, declining air quality, and an increase in greenhouse gas emissions. Research shows that creating a culture of walking improves everyone's health and well-being.
Aims & objectives	The IWalk Club's goals are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce car trips to school</li> <li>• Encourage walking and other active modes of travel</li> <li>• Reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions</li> <li>• Promote healthier lifestyle choices for students and their families</li> </ul>
Type of intervention	Education (awareness, behaviour)
Intervention	Competition in which students are motivated to walk to school every day. Children collect stamps for every time they walk to school and can win a prize when they have collected a certain number of stamps.
Implementation level	Local
Target population/groups	Children: All Ontario elementary schools and middle schools (Kindergarten to Grade 8) – approx. 4,000 schools in 106 school districts
Aspects of transport, environment and health	Air pollution, physical activity, walking

included	
Methods used	<p>Using the materials provided by Green Communities, each school designed an IWalk Club programme that met the needs of its student population and the larger community.</p> <p>Schools (grades and/or classes and/or the entire school) can register online and obtain a complete package of information. The IWalk Club helps make every day a walk-to-school day. Students are rewarded each time they walk (or bike) to school with a stamp in their personal IWalk Club card. Every tenth stamp is a Golden Sneaker sticker. Students who earn five Golden Sneaker stickers receive a certificate of appreciation and may be eligible for prizes determined by each school (e.g. extra recess, golden shoe awards, visit from local celebrities). Student participation is voluntary.</p> <p>Schools also organized other in-school walking activities. To encourage participation of local community stakeholders, which helps raise the programme to a more sustainable level, 'local champions' are offered a fee of C\$1,000 towards the cost of locally promoting the IWalk Club.</p>
Stakeholder involvement	<p>Children, parents, teachers, head teachers, health units, traffic safety engineers and the police participated in the programme. These local stakeholders adapted the IWALK Club programme to their local needs. Green Communities Canada (coordinator) does not work directly with schools, but supports community stakeholders who do.</p>

## Evaluation

Evaluation methods & study design	<p>Baseline data are collected as soon as a school registers. Two annual evaluations are conducted to track increases in daily physical activity, avoided greenhouse gas emissions and the number of vehicle trips to school.</p> <p>All of the registered schools were evaluated (90 in 2005, 292 in 2006). A grand prize draw was offered to schools for returning a completed questionnaire and to those who showed an improvement over their baseline.</p> <p>Health benefits were not established from the available information, but the University of Toronto is currently conducting a study for the entire walk to school programme (not specifically the IWalk Club).</p>
Evaluation results	<p>The IWalk Club was launched in Ontario in 2005. By the beginning of May 2005, 90 schools had registered. In October 2006, 292 schools had registered.</p> <p>The average number of students enrolled per school was 370, the average estimated number of walks each week was three. Average participation in 2005 was 14 weeks and in 2006, 26 weeks.</p> <p>Eighty per cent of schools held in-school activities related to the IWalk Club.</p> <p>Results for 2005:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16,654 students at 83 schools participated (of 90 registrations) in the IWALK Club between February and May 2005</li> <li>• Together, these students walked 277,539 kilometres</li> <li>• 71% of participating students walked to school (baseline 43%), while 76% participated in IWALK Club activities organized in the school</li> <li>• 73% of participating schools reported significant increases in the number of students walking to school</li> <li>• 4,000 students walked 151,978 kilometres to and from school, avoiding the release of 27.7 tons of greenhouse gases</li> <li>• 67% of participating schools involved their entire school population in the IWALK Club</li> <li>• 37% of schools set up 'Walk a Block' zones around their schools</li> <li>• 37% used the Walk around the World poster, and 40% of schools conducted a 'hands-up survey' to track participation</li> </ul> <p>It is assumed that one-third of the participating students actually shifted</p>

	<p>from being driven to walking all or part of the way to school.</p> <p>Results for 2006:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 154,901 students in 209 schools participated (of 292 registrations) in the IWALK Club between January 2005 and November 2006</li> <li>• Together, these students walked 10,873,288 kilometres – 70 kilometres each</li> <li>• 70% of schools joined the programme in 2005 and continue to use the initiative to encourage more everyday walking</li> <li>• 69% of participating students walked to school (baseline: 50%), while 80% participated in IWALK Club activities that took place during the school day</li> <li>• 75% of participating schools reported significant increases in the number of students walking to school</li> <li>• 67% of participating schools involved their entire school population in the IWALK Club</li> <li>• 300 schools participated for one month or more during International Walk to School Month and walked an additional 567,000 km</li> <li>• Approximately 420 tons of greenhouse gas emissions were avoided (based on the assumption of a walking distance of three journeys of 0.5 km every week, which is a fairly conservative estimate)</li> </ul> <p>Some quotes from participating schools:  'Walking every day has helped some of our students lose up to 20 pounds!'  'Walking every day is awesome. It's fun and it helps me exercise!'  'Great ideas, letter samples, got us started. We will also be starting a walking school bus.'  'I used to get into trouble a lot. Walking every day helps ease the pressure so I can cool down.'</p> <p>The International Walk to School celebrations in October 2005 and 2006 were included in the IWalk Club as part of the provincial media release and backgrounder. The celebration was extensively covered across the province of Ontario and reached 3 million people.  Website visits remain high: 52,986 visits between December 2005 and December 2006.</p>
Conclusions	<p>The number of creative programmes, activities and celebrations organized by participating schools and community members in the two years of the IWALK Club is truly inspiring and indicates that the programme is well received. The objectives (see above) have been met, and have a positive impact on schools and their communities.</p>

### Implementation issues

Sustainability	<p>The IWALK Club builds on the success of International Walk to School Week (October) and Walking/Wheeling Wednesdays, and was inspired by Go for Gold, Buckinghamshire, UK.</p> <p>The intervention will be sustained in the future. Whether it can permanently affect risk factors is not known, although it is assumed that one-third of the participating students shifted from being driven to walking all or part of the way to school.</p>
Intersectoral collaboration	<p>Representatives of several sectors were involved in the local implementation of the intervention. These included transport planners, public health units and environmental associations.</p>
Ease of implementation: Lessons learned	<p>The IWalk Club is easily replicated. The member cards were success factors, as completing them is a great motivator for students.</p> <p>Barriers for schools to participate: running out of time/getting more involved in other school activities; implementing the programme in February was not a good idea because schools already had their own walking programme in place and were not able to make changes to implement this new component; some schools did not continue the programme in the following year due to a loss of parent volunteers.</p>

**Full assessment**

<b>HEALTH EFFECTS</b>		<b>INTERVENTION DESIGN</b>		<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>	
					
Measured health effects		Study design		Sustainability	
Assumed health effects		Evidence base for effectiveness		Inter-sectoral collaboration	
		Combination of measures used		Transferability	
					
no info	weak/negative	moderate/dubious	good/positive	excellent/very positive	

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