



# The WalkStreet Journal

A NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI WALKSAFE™ PROGRAM  
ISSUE 7, SPRING 2011

## ***LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR***

Welcome to the latest issue of *The WalkStreet Journal*! In this issue, we deliver an update on the 2010 Statewide WalkSafe™ Poster Contest, the Walking School Bus program, community outreach events, and the expansion of our educational component to reach children with special needs. The WalkSafe™ team has moved into 2011 with renewed strength and efforts to combat unintentional injury and improve pedestrian safety and health for children!

**Gillian Hotz, PhD**

*WalkSafe™ Program Director*

*University of Miami Miller School of Medicine*



## **2010 WALKSAFE™ POSTER CONTEST WINNERS HONORED AT MIAMI-DADE SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**

February 9<sup>th</sup> was an unforgettable day for the 2010 WalkSafe™ Poster Contest winners. The three state winners, all from Miami-Dade, were honored and recognized by Miami-Dade County Public School Board Chair Ms. Perla Tabares-Hantman for their hard work, creativity, and dedication to safety. At the School Board meeting, the student winners were accompanied by their families, teachers, and school administrators as they received their prizes and accolades. The winners included: Ariadna Rodriguez from Gertrude K. Edelman/Sabal Palm Elementary (K-1 category), Aranzazu Bravo from Sunset Elementary (2-3 category), and Denver Pomilban from Mater Academy of International Studies (4-5 category). Students were awarded either a bicycle or laptop computer, along with a certificate and a pair of Nike running shoes!

The students should be very proud of their accomplishments, as there were a total of 354 poster submissions from 159 schools in Miami-Dade, Monroe, Polk, and Palm Beach Counties, making 2010 the most competitive year in contest history! To view the winning posters, visit [www.walksafe.us](http://www.walksafe.us), then click on the WalkSafe™ Poster Contest banner.



***Ariadna Rodriguez, Grade 1***



***Aranzazu Bravo, Grade 2***



***Denver Pomilban, Grade 5***



## WALKSAFE'S WALKING SCHOOL BUS PROGRAM COMING TO TWO CITY OF MIAMI ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



WalkSafe is proud to announce the kick-off of Walking School Bus (WSB) programs at two schools in Miami: Riverside and Morningside Elementary. After Spring Break, children and parents will join together and walk safe routes to school to promote pedestrian safety while leading healthy lifestyles. WSB will provide an opportunity for the participating children to walk together and strengthen positive decision-making skills,

while parent volunteers will have the opportunity to model safe and healthy behaviors for their children. Together, children and parents will engage in daily physical activity on the way to school and set an example for their communities. Students and parents at Morningside and Riverside are encouraged to participate in WSB - maps of existing routes will be available at each school's main office, and if you don't fit into an existing route, we will create a new route for you! To learn more about the WalkSafe™ WSB program, or for information on how to start a WSB program at your school, contact Anabel Anon, Project Coordinator, at [aanon@med.miami.edu](mailto:aanon@med.miami.edu).



### NETWORK WITH WALKSAFE!



Follow and "like" WalkSafe on Twitter and Facebook! Regular posts include invitations to future events and the inside scoop on what's going on in the program. WalkSafe has hundreds of followers... and we want you to join the force! Also be sure to check out our Teacher Training Videos and instructional videos for children on our YouTube page at [youtube.com/WalkSafeProgram](https://youtube.com/WalkSafeProgram).

## WalkSafe™ Educational Program to Include Children with Special Needs

WalkSafe's modified curriculum for children with special needs is slated to launch in five Miami-Dade County public elementary schools in May. The project team has begun planning with the target schools and is in the midst of curriculum and lesson plan development. With the help of faculty at Villa Lyan, a private school for children with special needs, the WalkSafe™ team was able to test the traditional curriculum and gain feedback and inspiration for the beginning phases of modified curriculum development. Teachers at Villa Lyan completed surveys assessing



the strengths and weaknesses of the traditional curriculum's applicability and effectiveness with their students. The modified curriculum is divided into five safety and health lessons, from walking basics to crossing at an intersection. Activities include a five-part interactive vocabulary

video, street-crossing simulations, and learning games such as "Pedestrian Simon Says" to reinforce each lesson's concepts. The curriculum has been created based on evidence-based teaching strategies for children with special needs, as well as research findings that indicate which types of difficulties and barriers these children face when navigating streets. For more information on the modified curriculum, or if you are interested in participating in this initiative, contact Christine Stinson, Project Manager, at [cstinson@med.miami.edu](mailto:cstinson@med.miami.edu).

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## PROMOTING WALKING AND WELLNESS AT COMMUNITY FAIRS

Since December 2010, WalkSafe has provided pedestrian safety and health education at three health and wellness fairs throughout Miami-Dade. The events provided a forum for the WalkSafe™ team to educate more than 340 children and adults in one-on-one and group settings. At the *Happy, Healthy Holiday Event*, we heightened students' safety awareness and advised them to use safe walking skills during the holiday break. WalkSafe™ staff informed educators and food service administration about WalkSafe™ programming during the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Department of Food and Nutrition *Day of Health and Wellness*. Representatives of both WalkSafe and BikeSafe participated in classroom presentations at the *Ada Merritt K-8 Center First Annual Health and Wellness Fair*. Our bicyclist and pedestrian-themed *Jeopardy*-style game reinforced students' knowledge of pedestrian and bicycling safety.



### WALK LIKE MADD!

WalkSafe participated in the Mothers Against Drunk Driving *Walk Like MADD 5-K Walk and Health Fair* on February 5<sup>th</sup> at Homestead-Miami Speedway. At the event, community members and agencies united to raise awareness of the dangers of drunk driving and to promote safety, health, and physical activity. WalkSafe had prize giveaways for kids and educated more than 150 children and adults about pedestrian safety. Other event participants included the Miami-Dade Fire Department and Hialeah Police Department. The event was well-attended and raised more than \$40,000 for the MADD cause.

### WALKSAFE HOLDS THE KEYS TO SAFETY

WalkSafe joined the University of Miami Department of Community Service at the DOCS Health Fair in Marathon, FL. Free health screenings and preventive care information was given to Keys residents in attendance. At the event, children earned WalkSafe™ give-aways by correctly describing safe street-crossing steps. WalkSafe provided



health and safety education through a peer-to-peer model to more than 40 children and families.

### UPCOMING EVENT! BRAIN FAIR 2011

The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis is hosting the 2011 Brain Fair at the Miami Science Museum on March 19<sup>th</sup>. Kids are encouraged to come and learn about the brain and how to protect it!

**Brain Fair 2011**  
For Kids of all ages  
Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup>  
**Free!** 10am-4pm

- Come Build a Neuron
- Create a Brain Puzzle
- Free Bike Helmet Give Away
- Face Painting, Puppet Shows and Much More!

Featured Speakers: 11 am-2 pm  
Richard Isaacson, MD: Alzheimer's Disease  
Ross Bullock, MD, PhD: Brain Injury  
Alberto Ramos, MD: Sleep Disorders  
Jeff Brosco, MD, PhD: Autism

Miami Science Museum  
3280 South Miami Ave  
Miami, FL 33129

For more information, visit [www.themiamiproject.org/brainfair](http://www.themiamiproject.org/brainfair) or email [brainfair@miamiproject.org](mailto:brainfair@miamiproject.org)

Sponsored by: University of Miami, Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, Pilot Center for Autism, and others.

## KIDS EVERYWHERE LEARN TO WALK MORE, WALK SAFE IN 2010

In 2010, schools across the country did their part in promoting pedestrian safety and encouraging students to walk more and walk safely. More than 230 elementary schools and 135,000 children in Miami-Dade County participated in the WalkSafe™ three-day educational program. Dozens of schools throughout other counties in Florida, Rhode Island, and New Mexico also participated in the program. At participating schools, students learned about safe and unsafe street-crossing behaviors, road signs and signals, choosing safe routes to school, and the benefits of walking daily. WalkSafe celebrates continued educational excellence in elementary schools and congratulates all the participating counties and schools for prioritizing the safety and health of the children in our communities!



## WHO'S GUARDING THE CROSSWALK?

WalkSafe™ staff and City of Miami Police are collaborating to resolve crossing guard disparities through a county-wide "Communities Putting Prevention to Work" grant awarded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The grant will provide funding to City of Miami Police to train, hire, and equip 24 new crossing guards at City of Miami schools for the 2011-2012 school year. WalkSafe™ staff is also actively identifying new funding to sustain the 24 new positions beyond the grant period. New funding may also provide money for additional crossing guards throughout the county. City of Miami elementary schools that are located in high-risk areas for pedestrian-hit-by-car incidents are staffed by *less than one crossing guard per school*, while other parts of Miami-Dade County have *more than four crossing guards per school*. This initiative is expected to improve safety and supervision in walking environments surrounding schools, thereby encouraging children and their parents to walk or bicycle to school.



## WHAT'S NEW AT BIKESAFE

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, BikeSafe™ staff was able to reach 100 kids and parents at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual *Pinecrest Bike Day* held at Pinecrest Gardens. The event was hosted by Dr. Larry Feldman, Vice-Chair of the Miami-Dade County Public School Board, along with Pinecrest Mayor Cindy Lerner. Free helmets were donated by The Miami Children's Hospital, while BikeSafe™ staff provided safety demonstrations, bike safety literature, reflective bracelets and lapel tags, as well as personalized "Share the Road" bicycle license plates donated by the Florida Bicycle Association (<http://www.floridabicycle.org/>). Due to the success of the BikeSafe™ educational program in summer camps, this month, the BikeSafe™ in-class and on-bike curriculum will be brought to three of the Miami-Dade County Parks and Recreation Spring Break camps! The course will be offered on a first-come, first-serve basis to campers who sign up for this free course. For more information about the BikeSafe™ program contact Dr. Michelina Witte at [mwitte2@med.miami.edu](mailto:mwitte2@med.miami.edu).



Questions or comments? Contact the WalkSafe™ office at (305)243-8115

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