



# The WalkStreet Journal

A NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI WALKSAFE™ PROGRAM  
ISSUE 8, SUMMER 2011

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

Welcome to the latest issue of *The WalkStreet Journal*! In this issue, we deliver an update on our Walking School Bus program, Special Education Curriculum for children with special needs, community outreach, and WalkSafe™ program accomplishments from around the state. As our team continues working toward improvements in child pedestrian safety and health, we encourage you to walk more, and walk safely!

**Gillian Hotz, PhD**

*WalkSafe™ Program Director  
University of Miami Miller School of Medicine*



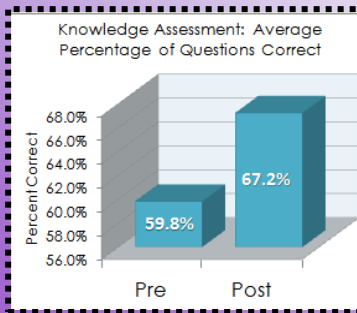
## **THE WHEELS ON WALKING SCHOOL BUS GO 'ROUND TOWN**

Parents and students at Morningside Elementary School joined together for a successful Walking School Bus (WSB) Kick-Off. The program, piloted in a Little Haiti elementary school, aims to increase physical activity of students while keeping them safe and promoting social interaction. Three parents volunteered as “drivers” and walked with their children, picking up other students at “stops” on the way to school. During the walk, children applied their pedestrian safety knowledge by demonstrating how to safely stop at the curb before crossing the street and identify the meanings of pedestrian signals, all while holding hands with an older sibling or adult. Staff from the WalkSafe™ program and Morningside Elementary witnessed the WalkSafe™ curriculum being translated into safe pedestrian behaviors. After the walk, all participants and school staff were acknowledged during a special breakfast assembly. The activity served as a thank you to individuals who made the program a success



and to further promote WSBs at the school. The program will continue through next school year and will grow to include more students and parents. We want to thank Mr. Mondesir and the Morningside Elementary School Administration for their support and for putting their students' safety first! For more information on how to get involved, contact Anabel Anon at [AAnon@med.miami.edu](mailto:AAnon@med.miami.edu).

# EXCEPTIONAL RESULTS FROM EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS



The WalkSafe™ Special Education Curriculum, designed to educate students with special needs about important pedestrian safety concepts, has completed its pilot stages in five Miami-Dade County schools with some notable outcomes. WalkSafe™ staff, classroom teachers, physical education coaches, and paraprofessionals worked together to educate nearly 400 students with special needs at Amelia Earhart, Biscayne Gardens, Auburndale, Tropical and Gulfstream Elementary. Students were given assessments before and after receiving the curriculum to measure knowledge of pedestrian safety concepts. On average, student scores increased 7.4% after receiving the WalkSafe™ Special Education Curriculum! This demonstrates the ability of students – even those with multiple and severe exceptionalities – to benefit from pedestrian safety education. According to our results, student performance improved in every subject area that was tested, including the ability to identify safe places to cross, pedestrian signal meanings, and street-crossing safety steps. Teachers involved in the pilot project agreed their students learned many new vocabulary words and concepts to help them remain injury-free while crossing the street. WalkSafe™ staff will use the assessments and teacher feedback to revise the curriculum before disseminating to additional schools and posting for download on the WalkSafe™ website. For more information about the curriculum, contact Katie Swidarski at [KSwidarski@med.miami.edu](mailto:KSwidarski@med.miami.edu).



## NETWORK WITH WALKSAFE!



Follow and “like” WalkSafe on Facebook and Twitter! Regular posts include invitations to future events and the inside scoop on what’s going on in the program. WalkSafe has hundreds of followers... what are you waiting for? 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).

# MIAMI TO RECEIVE 24 NEW CROSSING GUARDS



WalkSafe and City of Miami Police joined efforts to resolve crossing guard disparities through the countywide “Communities Putting Prevention to Work” grant awarded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This grant facilitates the training and hiring of 24 new crossing guards at City of Miami schools for the next academic year. WalkSafe will continue to work with community leaders and stakeholders to secure additional funding sources and ensure long-term sustainability. Toward this effort, WalkSafe™ staff has begun conducting site surveys at schools to corroborate the need for the new crossing guards. Additionally, WalkSafe is embarking on a large-scale educational effort to promote physical activity to children, parents, and school staff. This initiative will inform the community about the placement of the new crossing guards and encourage more children to walk and bike to school! For more information, contact Derek Slagle at [DSlagle@med.miami.edu](mailto:DSlagle@med.miami.edu).



# WALKSAFE AROUND THE SUNSHINE STATE!

During the 2010 school year, WalkSafe continued its expansion into counties outside of Miami-Dade in collaboration with AAA Auto Club South. The WalkSafe™ educational program was implemented in 30 elementary schools spanning seven counties in Florida! Using the WalkSafe™ curriculum, teachers across Florida taught important pedestrian safety lessons to nearly 15,000 elementary school students. Variations of the WalkSafe™ curriculum were also used by Safe Routes to School programs in Philadelphia and New Mexico to provide safety education to schools. For more information about the WalkSafe™ educational program, contact Christine Stinson at [CStinson@med.miami.edu](mailto:CStinson@med.miami.edu).

County	# of Students Educated	# of Schools Participated
Brevard	194	1
Collier	2,921	5
Lee	105	1
Monroe	3,096	9
Orange	1,429	2
Palm Beach	5,503	8
Polk	1,628	4
Outside Florida	385	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,261</b>	<b>30</b>

## SPOTLIGHT on: POLK COUNTY, FL

On April 8<sup>th</sup> the three WalkSafe™ Poster Contest winners from Polk County were recognized for their artistic talents at an assembly organized by Janine Curlutu and Teghan Sheets of Lakeland Regional Medical Center (LRMC). Michelle Gomez from Wahneta Elementary, Hannia Guerrero from Auburndale Central, and Savannah Singleton from Garner Elementary were all present, accompanied by their parents and school representatives. During the ceremony, contest winners were awarded with a framed copy of their poster and a pair of Nike running shoes. Additionally, in order to raise public awareness of the importance of injury prevention and their ongoing efforts in Polk County schools, LRMC has posted a full-length article highlighting the assembly on their website in the “News & Events” section.

### Lakeland Regional Works with Elementary Schools to Prevent Injuries

[PRINT PAGE](#)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27 2011

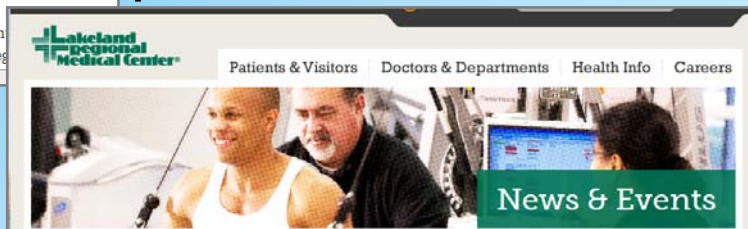
Recently, Lakeland Regional Medical Center hosted a reception and announced three Polk County elementary students as winners of the WalkSafe™ poster contest.

Michelle Gomez, a first-grader from Wahneta Elementary; Hannia Guerrero, a third-grader from Auburndale Central Elementary; and Savannah Singleton, a fourth-grader from Garner Elementary were named the winners of the contest and each received their framed poster and a pair of tennis shoes.



Teghan Sheets, Michelle Gomez, Hannia Guerrero, Savannah Singleton and Janine Curlutu, RN, Trauma Program Manager

“WalkSafe™ was designed by the University of Miami to help decrease the alarming number of school children struck by vehicles while walking to school in the Miami area,” said Teghan Sheets.



# Community Outreach



On March 19<sup>th</sup>, more than 1,000 children visited the Miami Science Museum for the **2011 Brain Fair**, where WalkSafe and BikeSafe taught how to protect the brain when walking and biking. In April, both programs reached out to Florida City residents at the **Everglades Community Health Fair**, an event dedicated to improving the lives of migrant workers and their families. Research Assistant Lily Sosa represented WalkSafe at the **Charles R. Drew Elementary 2011 Career Fair** on May 11<sup>th</sup>. The event featured presentations from the Miami-Dade Police Department and Department of Health. WalkSafe & BikeSafe also provided safety tips to hundreds of families at **The Children's Trust Family Expo** on May 14<sup>th</sup>, a day-long event that featured more than 250 vendors. At **Walk to Be Fit**, WalkSafe provided pedestrian safety education to Miami-Dade County Public School employees as they participated in a challenge to take 10,000 steps each day to improve overall health.

## Staffbook

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### WalkSafe

Congratulations to Christine Stinson, Program Manager, and Katie Swidarski, Project Coordinator, who graduated from the University of Miami on May 12<sup>th</sup> with Master's Degrees in Public Health. Both Christine and Katie, along with Assistant Director Dr. Carolina Gutierrez, will present program efforts and research at the 2011 National Safe Routes to School Conference in Minneapolis this summer!



### BikeSafe

Congrats to Dr. Michelina Witte, Program Manager, on becoming a League Cycling Instructor certified by the League of American Bicyclists! And good luck to Derek Slagle, Project Coordinator, who was recently accepted into Florida Atlantic University's PhD program in Health Administration!

May 1 at 2:05pm · [Like](#) [Comment](#) ·

## WHAT'S NEW AT BIKESAFE?

BikeSafe is geared up to bring its bicycle safety curriculum to Miami-Dade County summer camps—Camps Metacumbe and Amelia Earhart are slated to receive the educational program this summer. Due to the success of the BikeSafe™ curriculum in Miami-Dade County spring and summer camps in the past, Miami-Dade County Parks and Recreation employees have agreed to become BikeSafe-certified instructors. Having additional BikeSafe™ instructors will enable BikeSafe's curriculum to reach an even greater number of children. Miami was one of only a few cities chosen for the Dutch Consulate's special *ThinkBike Summit*. At the workshop, BikeSafe™ staff provided feedback and ideas for the creation of bike facilities in the City of Miami. BikeSafe has also participated in community outreach events throughout Miami-Dade County and will be providing one-on-one safety education at The Village South Health Fair on June 25<sup>th</sup>. 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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