



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hartington Schools Join Forces for Healthier Students

Event encourages more walking, biking to school

Hartington, Neb. (Oct. 6, 2010) — Schoolchildren in Hartington took the first steps toward a healthier lifestyle Wednesday morning. Students from Hartington Holy Trinity and Hartington Public School took part in International Walk to School Day. Now in its 13th year, this worldwide event celebrates the benefits children get from walking to school.

In Hartington, more than 250 students in kindergarten through sixth grade gathered at 7:30 a.m. to hear Mayor Bill Yates cheer them on and encourage them to eat healthy foods. A local wellness mascot called Mr. Carrot and Willie the Hartington Public Schools mascot joined in as students, parents and teachers walked together to their schools. Nearly all of the K-6 students from Hartington Public School and Hartington Holy Trinity participated. Each school also held a Welcome to School event with healthy breakfast foods for the students.

The Walk to School Day event was a partnership with Safe Routes Nebraska and the Nebraska Department of Roads. “Walking to school is a great way for children to be more active,” said Kelly Morgan, program coordinator for Safe Routes Nebraska. “Safe Routes Nebraska provides resources to help schools and communities get children out of the car and on their feet.”

Jackie Freeman, the school nurse for Hartington Public Schools, was pleased with the turnout. She hopes parents and children will see that walking to school is a good option. “We want to encourage more walking as a way for children to be more active and as a way to alleviate traffic around the school at the beginning and end of the school day,” said Freeman.

Holy Trinity Principal Terry Kathol said the Walk to School Day event reinforces the message that students need to exercise and eat healthy food. “It’s alright to walk to school,” Kathol said. “You don’t need to have mom and dad drop you off.”

More than 1,000 Nebraska schoolchildren participated in International Walk to School Day events across the state. Safe Routes Nebraska offers information for schools and communities that want to plan their own Walk to School Day events. Local leaders can also apply for federally funded grants through Safe Routes. Funds are available for infrastructure improvements to make school routes safer as well as projects to encourage children to walk or bike to school. Information on those programs can be found at www.saferoutesne.com.

Photos of Hartington’s International Walk to School Day event are available in the “Press Room” section at www.saferoutesne.com.

For more information about Safe Routes Nebraska, contact Morgan at (402) 476-7331 or kmorgan@sinclairhille.com. You can also contact Brad Penner at (402) 489-2121 or bpenner@snitilycarr.com.

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