



April-May 2015



Coordinator's Corner

Spring has arrived and it's a wonderful time to promote safe walking and biking through action and outreach. This year marks the 45th anniversary of Earth Day, celebrated on April 22. SRTS is environmental-friendly, so consider holding Earth Day activities all spring by highlighting the environmental benefits of walking and biking. You will find interesting facts and fun activity ideas below.



Bike to School Day, SRTS's signature spring event, is also right around the corner. Get ready by registering your event on www.walkbiketoschool.org and you will be eligible for multiple bicycle, helmet and bike rack giveaways from the National Center for Safe Routes to School. Next, review the proper way to lock your bike in a video produced by the Georgia Safe Routes to School Resource Center. For even more inspiration, read this month's Friends & Faces column about Meg Rapelye-Goguen and Phoenix Bikes in Arlington. Their programs help inspire kids to ride more and engage them in fixing bikes. Meg also shares some tips to get more people riding in your community.

In addition, we are pleased to announce the winners from the March round of QuickStart Mini-grants and share information about other SRTS-related initiatives including the Fire Up Your Feet Spring Activity Challenge and United Nations' Global Road Safety Week.

As usual, there's a lot going on with SRTS! If there's anything we can do to help support your events, or you are interested in more information on any of the topics included here, please call the Virginia SRTS Hotline at 1-855-601-7787 or send an email to info@VirginiaSRTS.org.

Regards,

Rob Williams
Virginia SRTS State Coordinator

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CALENDAR

APRIL

- 20-21: Weight of the State Conference (Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth and Prevention Connections)
- 22: Earth Day

MAY

- 1-31: Bike Month (League of American Bicyclists)
- 4-10: Global Road Safety Week (United Nations)
- 6: Bike to School Day
- 15: Bike to Work Day

Let us know about SRTS events in your community!

Click [here](#) to send your information so we can include it in our calendar.

Friends & Faces

This month's friendly face belongs to Meg Rapelye-Goguen, the Executive Director of Phoenix Bikes, a non-profit youth program and community bike shop in south Arlington.



How did you personally become involved with youth and bicycling?

I have always been a recreational rider since I had a mountain bike when I was a kid growing up in New Hampshire. Over the years, I've participated in cycling events and have done a handful of sprint triathlons and adventure races, and a week-long charity ride (7 days, 545 miles from San Francisco to Los Angeles as part of AIDS LifeCycle).

My passion professionally, however, is youth development and nonprofit management. From my early experience as an Officer in the U.S. Coast Guard, to working with 18-24 year old AmeriCorps Members with the Corporation for National and Community Service, to my social work education and various nonprofit jobs, I've always enjoyed working with the next generation and helping them fulfill their potential, whatever they dream that to be. It is such a privilege to work with the youth mechanics at Phoenix Bikes and help them not only enjoy bicycling for fun, transportation, and a healthy lifestyle, but to also teach them life skills along the way.



How has Phoenix Bikes participated in Safe Routes to School initiatives in the past, and what are some of the plans for the future?

Phoenix Bikes has primarily participated in SRTS by supporting and promoting Bike to School Day activities in the fall and spring. We offer repair stations and free basic repairs/adjustments at schools in Arlington County for those participating in these events to ensure students have a safe ride on that day and beyond.

This year, Phoenix Bikes is working closely with Arlington Transportation Partners, BikeArlington, and Tom Norton, our local Safe Routes to School Division Coordinator, to organize and promote Bike to School Day coming up on May 6. This year's event will be both fun and competitive, with awards for the elementary, middle, and high schools with the best participation! Phoenix Bikes will be crafting the soon-to-be coveted trophies for the winning schools out of recycled bike parts. We will also have repair stations at both Thomas Jefferson Middle School and Kenmore Middle School, with plans to engage the school's Bike Club members in promoting the event among their peers, cheering on those who bike to school, and staffing the repair station.

Learn more about Phoenix Bikes in the rest of this column [below](#).

Bike to School Day is May 6!

Bike to School Day (BTSD) is less than one month away. This year, BTSD is on Wednesday, **May 6**, but we encourage schools to hold one or more biking events throughout the month of May as their schedules allow. So far we have **63** registered events in Virginia!



Don't forget to register your school's event on the www.walkbiketoschool.org website so you can be part of the buzz leading up to and after BTSD. Not only will registering help us reach our goal of 150 Virginia BTSD events in 2015,

but you will be automatically entered for a chance to win bicycles, helmets or a new bike rack for your school or student-focused organization!



Vienna Elementary Bike to School Day

The National Center for Safe Routes to School, the agency that coordinates National Bike to School Day, in partnership with Schwinn's Helmets on Heads program and Sportworks, will give away ten Schwinn bicycles and twenty Schwinn helmets to ten lucky schools and two Sportworks Plaza Jr. High Density Bike Racks to two lucky schools or student-focused community organizations that register to participate in this year's Bike to School Day. Two drawings for the bikes and helmets will take place every week beginning on April 15, so the sooner you register the more chances you will have to win. Registration closes on May 31. Visit the National Center's website for more information.

Fire Up Your Feet! Spring Activity Challenge

Past issues of the Virginia SRTS Newsletter have covered the academic, health, and fiscal benefits of physical activity, but now physical activity can help your school earn cash during Fire Up Your Feet's Spring Activity Challenge. Read more about the program in the excerpt from the Safe Routes to School National Partnership's **April Newsletter** below, and visit the Fire Up Your Feet website to [sign up](#).

"Schools play a big role in encouraging active lifestyles for students of all ages and ensuring kids get the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Fire Up Your Feet helps students, families and school staff make small lifestyle changes that can yield big rewards in terms of overall health. Even better, **more than \$100,000 in awards** will be given out nationally to support active schools. The Fire Up Your Feet Activity Challenge kicks off in April and May in select states and regions [including all parts of Virginia]."



How to Lock Your Bike Video

To help prepare for BTSD, our friends at the [Georgia SRTS Resource Center](#) developed a video about how to properly lock your bike. Check it out!



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oc6L15ALNhk&feature=youtu.be>

UN Global Road Safety Week

Did you know that every day more than 500 children worldwide are killed in traffic collisions? Reducing this staggering number by urging local and national officials to make transportation safety a priority is the primary goal of the Third UN Global Road Safety Week, May 4-10, 2015.



The theme of the week is #SaveKidsLives, and the week is meant to "highlight the plight of children on the world's roads, generate action to better ensure their safety, and promote the inclusion of safe and sustainable transport in the post-2015 development agenda."

To take part in the campaign, visit the website at www.savekidslives2015.org. There you will find a video, the children's declaration that can be signed and delivered to local officials, and a printable signboard to include in your #Safe. [Send us](#) your #Safe to be included in a future newsletter!

QuickStart Mini-grants

We are pleased to announce the winners from the March round of QuickStart Mini-grants. Students at these schools will be participating in some extra creative bike, walk and roll to school events over the next few weeks.

- **Olde Creek Elementary**, Fairfax is purchasing a banner and t-shirts for their bike rodeo.



Olde Creek Elementary, Fairfax; BTSD 2014

- **Ashburn Elementary**, Ashburn is providing bicycle bells and incentive items for bike rodeo participants.
- **Patrick Henry Elementary**, Arlington is using their mini-grant to purchase bike helmets to supplement their "Save the Noggins Bike Helmet Drive" and giveaway.
- **Lynbrook Elementary**, Springfield is buying supporting materials for a Bicycle Safety Skills and Education station at the school health fair.



Lynbrook Elementary, Springfield; Bike Rodeo 2014

- **Simonsdale Elementary**, Portsmouth is purchasing a skateboard and scooter rack, locks and helmets to help reduce Simonsdale's carbon footprint as part of an Earth Day celebration.
- **Linville-Edom Elementary**, Linville will get a bicycle fleet that includes two balance bikes for students to use at their bike rodeo.
- **Stratford Program**, Arlington will be buying three balance bikes, locks and supporting equipment for a newly developed bicycle PE curriculum for students with special needs.

Feeling inspired? It's never too early to start thinking about your application for the next round of QuickStart Mini-grants in the fall. We know back to school can be a chaotic time with a lot going on, but it's also a great time to establish biking and walking habits that will carry on throughout the year. Look for more information about the fall QuickStart Mini-grants on our website and in the summer edition of the newsletter.

Celebrate Earth Day with SRTS!

While April 22, 2015 marked the 45th anniversary of the first Earth Day celebration in 1970, there's never a bad time to celebrate our planet through a variety of SRTS activities. The transportation sector is responsible for nearly a third of the greenhouse gas emissions in the United States, which means shifting how students and their parents arrive at school can have a big impact. Keep reading for a variety of ideas to implement at your school, and check out the [Go Green with Safe Routes to School](#) **Learn it. Do it. Live it.** resource on our website.



- The Chesterfield County Safe Routes to School Program championed a **No-Idling Campaign** at four schools April 20-24. Drivers were encouraged to turn off their engines in the drop-off loop to reduce exhaust fumes and airborne particulates. Learn more about their No-Idling Campaign in the [Chesterfield County SRTS April Newsletter](#).
- Simonsdale Elementary School in Portsmouth rose to the challenge of increasing the number of students walking to school by hosting a **park-and-walk event** earlier this month. The organizers were expecting about two dozen participants and were shocked and pleased when over 90 students and 30 adults showed up to walk to school. Organizers wrote chalk messages along the quarter-mile route, encouraging students to hop on one leg, then the other, and complete a hopscotch course. Participants received "Be Safe, Be Seen" reflective slap bracelets and the school repeated the event for Earth Day.
- The **Greening Tree Activity Kit** is a great way to visually represent how students are getting to school. This activity can be done by individual classrooms, grades or school-wide. Thanks to [Fairfax County Safe Routes](#) for making it available for download on their website.
- Encourage more biking, walking, bus riding and carpooling with the **Pollution Punchcard** from Safe Routes to School in Marin, California. Everything you need including instructions, ideas to publicize your event and implement related classroom activities is included in the [Guidebook](#).
- Lastly, see how biking and walking can really make a difference in your **carbon footprint** with this online [carbon calculator](#) designed for kids.

Did You Know? The Environmental Benefits of Walking and Biking

In honor of Earth Day, this month's Did You Know? column is all about the ways walking and biking are good for the planet.



Swansboro Elementary, Richmond

- Half of U.S. schoolchildren are dropped off at school in the family car. If 20% of those living within two miles of school were to bike or walk instead, it would save 4.3 million miles of driving per day. Over a year, that saved driving would prevent 356,000 tons of CO₂ and 21,500 tons of other pollutants from being emitted. (Pedroso, M., 2008 - [Safe Routes to School: Steps to a Greener Future](#))
- Increasing the mode share of all trips made by bicycling and walking from 12% to 15% could lead to fuel savings of 3.8 billion gallons a year and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 33 million tons per year. This is equivalent to replacing 19 million conventional cars with hybrids. (Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 2008 - [Active Transportation for America](#))
- When car travel restrictions reduced morning traffic by 23% during the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, ozone concentrations decreased 28% and acute care visits

for asthma decreased 41%. (Friedman, M., et al., 2001 - [Journal of the American Medical Association](#))



Shreveview Elementary, Falls Church

- Beyond improvements in air quality, biking and walking help the environment in the following ways: Biking and walking are less resource intensive than driving:
 - The production of cars generates 1.2 billion cubic yards of pollution each year.
 - Less rubber is used for bike tires and sneakers, which helps prevent the clearing of forests for rubber plantations.
 - Walking and biking reduce noise pollution and roadkill.
- Riding a bike and walking reduce pollution and CO₂ emissions:
- Riding or walking to work or school can cut household emissions by 6 percent.
 - Cars produce .97 pounds of pollution per mile, walking and biking, virtually none!

Friends & Faces continued

Phoenix Bikes is much more than SRTS. What is its mission and what types of services and programs do you provide to support this mission?

The mission of Phoenix Bikes is to educate youth, promote bicycling, and build community.

EDUCATING YOUTH: Phoenix Bikes educates youth through our free, year-round after school and summer programming, principally our “Earn-a-Bike” program during which youth learn the basics of bike repair, work on a bike to give to a community member in need, and finally refurbish a bike to keep. While bike maintenance is our focus, but through our program, youth learn teamwork, confidence, self-reliance, and grit, among many other success skills for life. Last year, 283 youth ages 12-18 participated in our programs.

PROMOTING BICYCLING: We believe bicycling is a viable and sustainable means of transportation and fitness. Our youth programs, monthly adult workshops, and sales of quality, refurbished bikes, offer Northern Virginia residents the tools, equipment, and skills to start and keep on riding. Saturday youth group rides, free monthly adult bike education workshops that include a women-only bike clinic called “All the Cycle Ladies” are just some of the ways we promote bicycling. We also make quality, refurbished bicycles and repair services available at a below-market rates, completing as many as 1,000 repairs annually. Additionally, last year we refurbished 563 used bicycles for sale at affordable prices, and refurbished over 40 bicycles for donation to community members in need - keeping these bikes out of area landfills. Finally, Phoenix Bikes holds three large-scale community bicycling events throughout the year (the Crystal City Phoenix Derby, the Kennan Garvey Memorial Ride, and the Arlington Fun Ride) to provide a fun way to celebrate bicycling.

BUILDING COMMUNITY: Phoenix Bikes is all about bringing people together and social justice by offering inclusive programs and shop services, with a focus on making owning and maintaining a bicycle accessible to all. We invite our supporters, (which included 168

volunteers in 2014), community partners, and youth program participants and their families to bi-monthly potlucks. Our gender diverse staff and knowledge of best practices for engaging women and girls in bike programs add to the success of the “All the Cycle Ladies” monthly workshops. Finally, we give back; over 40 bikes last year were donated to community members in need through partnerships with other area non-profits such as New Hope Housing, A-SPAN (Arlington Street People’s Network), and Salvation Army. Any excess bike parts and materials are also regularly shared with other area bike non-profits, such as Bikes for the World.

What advice do you have for engaging parents and getting the whole community involved in bicycling?

Bicycling can certainly be a family affair and is a great way to both exercise and get around the community. We encourage families to climb onto some bikes and pedal away, instead of piling in car seats in a car and driving away! Given the increase in bicycling for transportation and recreations, there are a number of trails and bike styles that make it possible for family biking to include little ones that are not ready to bike on their own. There are more and more off-road options for riding. For example, Arlington County can be circumnavigated via bike trail (about 16 miles)! Community bike shops and co-ops offer quality used/refurbished bikes and parts at an affordable rate, reducing a financial barrier for family riding, especially for kids who tend to grow out of their bikes so quickly. Finally, look into bike repair education workshops and programs, many of which are free (like at Phoenix Bikes), to help you perform your own basic repair services for your family’s bikes and give you more confidence on the bike path/trail.

For more information about Phoenix Bikes, check out their [website](#) and follow them on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

