

May 2011 Canada Walks e-News

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The Walkolution is growing – keep the momentum going!

You might have received our May Walkolution News a few days ago. It was distributed in error as we have encountered technical difficulties with the software. We have now corrected these errors and are sending it again. We apologize for filling up your in-basket. Canada Walks team.

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[Canada Walks](#) is an evolving program of Green Communities Canada which aims to showcase best practice in walkable communities.

Ontario Schools [Spring into Spring](#): April 21 - June 8.



Spring is here! Get active and [Spring into Spring](#); and why not team it up with [iCANwalk to school...can you?](#) Register your pledge and track kilometers walked by your students and staff, both to school and at school, [here](#).



iCANwalk to school...can you? is brought to you by Green Communities Canada and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario. The Heart and Stroke Foundation believes that every child deserves to grow up healthy and is committed to helping schools create healthy community environments. Spark Together for Healthy Kids, Jump Rope for Heart and the Heart Healthy Kids tool kits are three unique resources to help our children be active and healthy. Get involved and be informed at <http://tinyurl.com/2dkd9pg>.



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Wednesday an important day at Morton Way Public School!

Kirstin Schwass, Morton Way's Physical Education Teacher and walking champion boasts that between 75-80% of the student population now participate in their regular [Walking Wednesdays](#) and other walking related activities.

As part of the school's daily physical activity (DPA), students do a Wednesday Walk every other week. It involves the whole school walking a route of about 400m around the school yard, to the beat of uplifting music, even during the cold winter months.



"We called it the *Wednesday Winter Walk* and trudged through the snow in the field. Now we're into our *Spring into Spring Walk*," says Kirstin. "We lucked out with the weather and have headed out even on cold days. This reinforces the idea that we can walk in any weather!" Students can run or walk the route and don't have to remain with their teacher or class since teachers are out walking too!

Morton Way promotes walking every day during [International Walk to School Week](#), Environment Week and Earth Week, with daily walking school buses. Currently two [Walking School Buses](#) operate each Wednesday to encourage active travel to school. Students get their *Walking School Bus Pass* each time they participate and are awarded a plastic walking school bus charm after ten walks with the bus. "Bus drivers" are two school staff members and a parent volunteer.

Every student in Grade 1-5 receives an [IWALK Club card](#). A filled card (50 walks) earns them a plastic walker charm to add to their zipper pull chain.

Kirstin works with two Grade 4 students who help to distribute Walk to School surveys to classroom teachers on Tuesday afternoon so students who walk on Wednesday can be surveyed. The students collect the surveys and tabulate the results with Kirstin; results are announced each Wednesday afternoon. If an entire class participated, it is eligible for a draw to win a bag of playground equipment for a week.

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2010 Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card released!

Canada's children and youth again scored an F overall for physical activity and a D for active transportation. [View](#) the entire Active Healthy Kids Canada 2010 Report (AHKC).

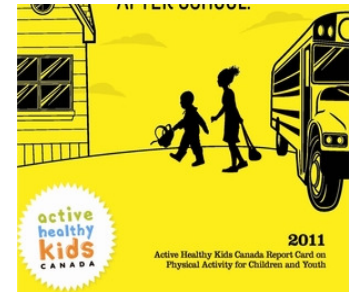
The report notes that across Canada, school transportation policies and parental safety fears result in children being denied opportunities to travel actively, exploring their neighbourhood and engaging in independent play.

Research backs up the theory that children who are active after school accumulate approximately 2,000 more steps per day



(about 2 kilometres) than children who are engaged in sedentary activity. Interestingly the AHKC report gives an A for proximity and availability of active play spaces, stating that 95% of parents polled have easy access to local parks and outdoor play spaces.

The report also highlights two other areas of concern: a lack of physical activity in children between the ages of 1-5 and after school programs that do not incorporate and embrace physical activity.



From the report: in a 2008 UNICEF study assessing early childhood education and care in economically advanced countries, Canada ranked at the bottom of 25 countries with a key factor reported to be “lack of substantial public investment in education until children reach the age of five.”

Although work is ongoing to fill the gap, Canada does not have physical activity guidelines for children under six. While international guidelines vary, the consensus is that all children aged 1-5 years should participate in at least two hours of physical activity every day, accumulated over many sessions and as part of play, games, transportation and recreation.

Schools and local municipalities can work with parents to change this by advocating and creating best routes for children to take active travel to school and other places in their neighbourhoods. Check out the School Travel Planning Canadian model framework for ideas on how to incorporate active routes for children into community plans at www.saferoutestoschool.ca/schooltravel.asp.

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Ontario Communities walkON Workshops in Thunder Bay

Co-hosted by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit and Green Communities' member EcoSuperior, the Ontario Communities WalkON project visited Thunder Bay April 21 to deliver a series of presentations featuring international walkability expert Gil Penalosa, Executive Director of our partner organization 8-80 Cities. We also attended a Thunder Bay strategic planning session on active transportation and delivered a workshop and walkabout for a pilot School Travel Planning project.



Thunder Bay has created an Active Transportation Plan and hired an Active Transportation Coordinator to oversee this work; as well the City has drafted a Transportation Demand Management Plan that incorporates active modes of travel and it is being presented to Council in June. The City is investing in public space improvements to their stunning waterfront that connects with the downtown core.

Thunder Bay's Mayor Keith Hobbs' Walkabout Wednesdays

The day included a meeting with Mayor Keith Hobbs and we were delighted to learn that every Wednesday, Mayor Hobbs takes public transit to a different part of the city, where he disembarks for his "Wednesday Walkabout."

This is a most unique twist to our oft-promoted "Walking Wednesdays" activity.

We challenge mayors across Canada to follow in Mayor Hobb's footsteps to get a real feel for local issues and in particular to experience their municipalities as a pedestrian.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Active Communities Summit, Guelph, Ontario

May 27, 8:15 am - 3:00 pm

Taking place at the University of Guelph Arboretum Centre, this summit is a collaboration of Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph in motion, Share The Road, The City of Guelph, The University of Guelph, The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Ontario and Speed River Bicycle. Their shared Vision is to make Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph bicycle and pedestrian friendly.



Walk21 Vancouver 2011

October 3-5, 2011

Registration now open.

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IN THE NEWS

Green Communities' Canada Walks
Jacky Kennedy was featured in an April 9
Green Planet insert, *People on the Move*,
that appeared in Sun newspapers across Canada.

Funds for After School Initiatives

Passed along from our colleagues in the Region of Waterloo, Metro grocery stores has relaunched their [Green Apple Fund](#).

The Region is using \$1,000 from the fund to purchase bicycle racks for the two schools participating in their School Travel Planning initiative.



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City of Waterloo Approves Complete Streets Policy

On April 18 the Council for the City of Waterloo, Ontario approved in principle the [Transportation Master Plan that includes a Complete Streets policy](#). Waterloo is likely the first municipality in Canada to adopt a Complete Streets policy, making active transportation an integral part of their municipal transportation system.



Surrey Makes Strides with Issuance of Comprehensive Walking Plan

On March 14, the City of Surrey, BC, adopted a new [Walking Plan](#), which sets out the city's vision for the expansion of walking as a safe and convenient transportation choice for the citizens of and visitors to Surrey.





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UN-HABITAT Adopts First-Ever Resolution on Public Spaces

There is a Growing Awareness that Quality Public Spaces are Linked to Quality of Life: This Resolution Requests UN-HABITAT's Executive Director to Ensure the Application of Place-Making Internationally.



April 15, 2011- Nairobi, Kenya. The Governing Council of [UN-HABITAT](#) (United Nations Human Settlement Programme) has adopted the [first-ever public space resolution](#) which urges the development of a policy approach for the international application of Placemaking.

The resolution, adopted during its 23rd Session, “requests the Executive Director, in collaboration with Habitat Agenda partners...to develop a policy approach on the role that place-making can play in meeting the challenges of our rapidly urbanizing world, to disseminate that policy and its results widely and to develop a plan for ensuring its application internationally...” Read more at: <http://www.unhabitat.org/>.

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Our partners





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