

June 8, 2015

Foothill School Really Knows How to Walk & Roll!

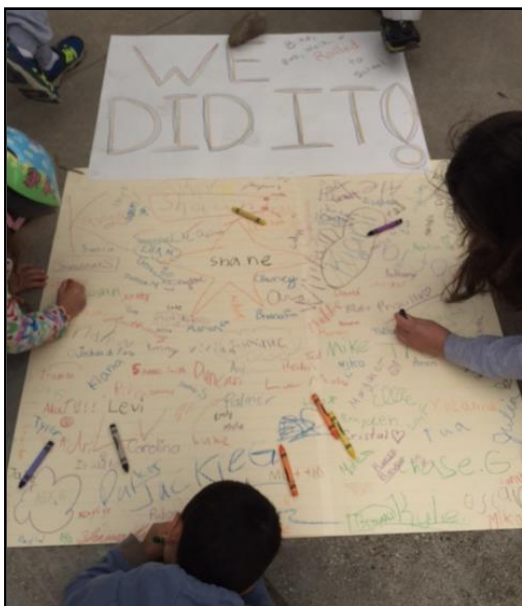
COAST's Safe Routes to School (SR2S) team gives a big 'high five' to Foothill Elementary School for the amazing accomplishments they've made with their Walk & Roll program this year! Particular kudos to Foothill resource teacher Kathy Stassforth, who spearheaded the Walk & Roll efforts throughout the school and led the charge to increased Walk & Roll participation school-wide!

Walk & Roll is all about kids using active, sustainable ways to get to school, like walking, bicycling, skateboarding, scootering, or (if those aren't feasible) car-pooling or bus-riding. With COAST's support, many schools hold weekly or monthly Walk & Roll programs where students walk or roll to school on Wednesdays, and teachers or 'champions' tally the numbers of kids who 'participate' (Brandon School, for example, has been counting Walk & Rollers weekly for years, and Ellwood School made impressive efforts this year in their program).

This year, Stassforth took it upon herself to work with Foothill Principal Dr. Bridget Braney, teachers, parents, students and COAST's SR2S Coordinator Kim Stanley to set up a weekly Walk & Roll Wednesday, and her dedication and energy has paid off: Across all classrooms, Foothill's average participation rate for the year has been over 50%, and on National Bike to School Day (May 6th), it jumped to over 70%, with six classrooms surpassing 90% participation, three classrooms breaking 70% and a school-wide total of 284 students walking or rolling in!

Pictured right: A group of students rolling and walking to Foothill School on National Bike to School Day.

Below: Kids sign the very artful B2SD victory poster!



But that's not all! This year, COAST challenged all area elementary schools to a four-month Walk & Roll Challenge held the first Wednesday of February through May. Out of 56 classrooms across 15 schools (with over 1,300 students competing), Foothill's 6th-grade classroom led by teacher Juri Holmes came in 2nd place with a cumulative average participation rate of 95.6%! They had the pleasure of winning a double-bike-blender smoothie party outside their classroom! It was a blast: lots of pedal-powered banana berry smoothies, lots of tunes and LOTS of exercise (those kids really worked up a smoothie appetite and an appreciation of human-powered activities)!

And if that weren't enough, Foothill held its own Walk & Roll competition for its weekly program. Coming in first place was Mrs. Hay's 3rd grade class, who won a walking field trip to Fairview Gardens where they learned about sustainable farming and enjoyed lunch with healthy treats right from the earth (energy for the walk back to school)!



Above: Juri Holmes' 6th-graders at their 2nd place winning Walk & Roll Challenge bike blender smoothie party.

For Stassforth, Walk & Roll is something she's used to. "I'd been participating in this program as a parent from El Camino School when both of my children were in attendance. As a full time teacher at Foothill, I decided to champion the program this year and get as many staff/students on board as possible. As I child in Pennsylvania, my nine siblings and I walked everywhere—our parents certainly couldn't be shuttling us everywhere we needed to be—and we didn't all fit in the car!"

Kathy sees the many benefits of a Walk & Roll program and encourages other schools to Walk & Roll too. "Walking, rolling, [car-pooling] or busing to school helps bond communities, allows for exercise in our great climate, decreases pollution and makes parking lot pick-up and drop-off much more manageable." There are obvious health and environmental benefits when students walk or roll, but kids can also build social and interpersonal skills, and parents can save money on fuel costs while reducing emissions. It's a win-win!

Stassforth also shared an effective approach at Foothill that helped incentivize students to increase participation: "Dr. Braney included the names of the highest [participating] classrooms on Monday Morning Announcements." That fueled the competition...everyone wanted that winning field trip!



Right: Foothill Principal Dr. Bridget Braney challenges one of the students to a blender race, with COAST's Nancy Eckert keeping a lid on things. It was a tie!



Above/below: Mrs. Hay's Walk & Roll victorious 3rd-graders during their walking field trip to Fairview Gardens.

Congratulations to Kathy for all her hard work and to all at Foothill School for a great year of Walk & Roll! If not already, we hope you'll be inspired to get Walking & Rolling this fall at your school, too!

Happy summer break from COAST!



For more information about COAST Safe Routes to School and ways to get involved with Walk & Roll and more, visit www.COAST-SantaBarbara.org or E-Mail SR2S Coordinator Kim Stanley at Kim@COAST-SantaBarbara.org.