

Encouragement Activities – Maurice Cody Public School Celebrates Success with their 200th Walking Wednesday!

Description: On Wednesday, June 8, 2005, Canada's Clean Air Day, families and staff at Maurice Cody Public School in Toronto celebrated their 200th **Walking Wednesday!** The celebrations involved many VIPs who accompanied students, parents and staff in a community parade led by a Scottish piper.

Maurice Cody, a participant of Green Communities | Active & Safe Routes to School since 1997, has successfully combined daily physical activity with environmental protection and classroom learning into their Walking Wednesday program. They are also one of four Toronto schools participating in Green Communities School Walking Routes pilot project.



Application: Maurice Cody Public School in Toronto, Ontario, Canada was one of the first three schools to participate in Green Communities | Active & Safe Routes to School program and the very first Toronto school to implement Walking School Buses. Maurice Cody has approximately 500 students in Junior Kindergarten through Grade 6 and almost all of them live within walking distance of the school.

Maurice Cody inspired the first weekly Walking Wednesday program in Canada in 1999 following on the heels of International Walk to School Day and then went on to initiate their Cross Canada Walking Tour. Not content to stay in Canada they then set off across North America and by the end of the 2003 school year they had 'walked' to the Panama Canal! About 86% of Cody students walk to school on Wednesdays.

Nuts & Bolts:

- The program relies heavily on parent volunteers with support from staff and students.
- Tables are set up in the school yard every Wednesday morning (inside the school during inclement weather) with parent volunteers.
- Walkers are also greeted with 'walking tunes' courtesy of many donations of walking songs.
- Students 'sign in' on large shoes made from poster board which are then displayed in the school hall. Students also receive their 'Cody Coyote' hand stamp.
- Every Wednesday morning during attendance, classroom teachers take note of how many students arrived at school 'actively'. In this way the school can calculate the distances walked by each class and then add to the school total.
- Every Tuesday morning during announcements the results from the previous Walking Wednesday are given, along with a reminder to "W-A-L-K: Walk to school on Wednesday!"
- Families who are unable to walk all the way to school on Wednesdays are urged to 'walk a block' – actually a minimum of two blocks.
- Walking Wednesday banners hang on the fence around the school.
- At the end of each school year a Recognition Assembly is held and the much coveted "Golden Shoe" award is presented to the class with the highest participation in Walking Wednesdays throughout the year.

Challenges: Bringing new parent volunteers presents ongoing challenges, as students graduate and those families leave the school. Efforts are underway to institutionalize the program within school policy.

Resources:

Visit www.saferoutestoschool.ca/index.php?page=walkwheelwed to download Walking Wednesday resources. Contact info@saferoutestoschool.ca for more information.

Related Tools: Cross Canada Map; tape machine for walking tunes; paper shoes for sign-in sheets; class hands-up surveys.