

September 28, 2005

Young children "Walk the Talk" for traffic safety

Point, pause and proceed key to staying safe

Edmonton... Students from two Edmonton-area schools joined police officers and Alberta's minister responsible for traffic safety at the Legislature Grounds to learn how to stay safe on roads and streets.

Grade 2 students from St. Bernadette School in Edmonton and Grade 2/3 students from Ministik School in Strathcona County took part in this year's Walk the Talk Day, an annual event staged to emphasize the importance of traffic safety practices to young children.

"Each year over 400 children are injured or killed while walking or bicycling," said Dr. Lyle Oberg, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. "This is unacceptable. With the Walk the Talk program, children are doing their part to try and cross the road safely. Motorists also need to do their part by always being alert for children crossing the road."

Oberg was joined at the event by representatives from the Edmonton and Calgary police services, RCMP and CN Police.

Walk the Talk Day is part of the government's Walk the Talk About Back to School Safety program. It brings together the Alberta Motor Association's School Patrol, Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research (ACICR), KIDSAFE Connection and the Golden Arrow Bus Lines to teach children about safe ways to walk to and from school. These groups also offer traffic safety tips for bicycle, skateboard, in-line skating and school bus safety, as well as railway crossing for those children who are required to cross railway tracks.

Last year, more than 151,800 elementary school children from 538 schools participated in the Walk the Talk program through activities with their schools or community organizations.

The Walk the Talk Back to School program was launched in 1997 to help prevent child cyclists and pedestrian injuries and deaths. A tool kit was produced and includes a teacher's resource guide and three interactive activity books, for children 5 -12 years of age, featuring the Kinetic Kids and their safety sidekicks.

For more information on traffic safety, visit the Traffic Safety Initiative's web site at www.saferoads.com

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Backgrounder attached

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Backgrounder

Alberta's Walk the Talk Program

History of Walk the Talk

- Launched in 1997 by the government to help prevent the more than 400 child cyclist and pedestrian injuries and deaths that occur in Alberta each year.
- Designed to give children and their parents the tools necessary to increase their personal safety on Alberta's roads.
- Consists of traffic safety tips such as the POINT, PAUSE and PROCEED pedestrian crossing safety system. Also includes safety practices for bicycling, skateboarding, in-line skating, railway crossing and bus safety.
- Alberta educators played a critical role in the development of the program.

- **Walk the Talk Day**

- Wednesday, September 28, 2005 is **Walk the Talk Day**.
- It encourages families to walk through their children's routes to-and-from-school and to provide safety tips to help avoid any potential dangers along the way.
- It highlights the importance of traffic safety, year-round.
- Alberta educators, parents, caregivers, motorists, school bus drivers, decision-makers and media are all part of the **Walk the Talk** team and can help spread its messages.
- Partners include: Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation Alberta Motor Association's School Safety Patrol; KIDSAFE Connection; and Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research (ACICR).

Program Activity Books

- The tool kit consists of a teacher resource guide, three activity books for children 5 - 12 years of age.
- The Kinetic Kids are five, fun characters and their safety sidekicks who appear in the interactive Walk the Talk activity books. The Kinetic Kids promote traffic safety through the Walk the Talk program, year-round.

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