



Buncombe County Health and Human Services

Public Health ~ Adult & Children's Protective Services ~ Economic Services & Work Strategies
Parks, Greenways & Recreation ~ Human Resources, Services Support & Finance

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May 9, 2013

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Olympic Medalist Lauren Tamayo to Join Buncombe County Students as They Celebrate Strive Not to Drive Week by Walking and Biking to School

Lauren Tamayo, Asheville's hometown Olympian, will be joining students at Hominy Valley Elementary School on Wednesday, May 15 as they bike to school during Buncombe County's Strive Not to Drive Week, May 12-18, 2013.

Ms. Tamayo, who earned a silver medal in track cycling at the 2012 London Olympics, will greet students as they arrive in two "bicycle trains" at Hominy Valley Elementary School on the morning of Wednesday, May 15. Media should plan to arrive at the main entrance of Hominy Valley Elementary School by 7:30am.

Ms. Tamayo's attendance at the Hominy Valley event will add to the enthusiasm students, parents, and administration already feel about walking and biking to school. Principal Dr. Angie Jackson notes that "This event aligns with Hominy Valley's Healthy Active Child Initiative. The staff worked hard this year to provide activities that promote healthy, active lifestyles for our students." Hominy Valley bike-to-school event organizer and parent Garrett Artz adds, "This is really about the kids having fun and getting away from the television and computer screens. My kids absolutely love 'driving' themselves to school."

Enka High School and Middle School resource officers from the Buncombe County Sheriff's Department will assist volunteers from the Enka High School bike club and Vulcan Materials Quarry to direct traffic and keep students safe. Local bike shops Motion Makers and Carolina Fatz will provide last minute repairs for students' bikes.

Hominy Valley is one of six schools across Asheville and Buncombe County that are hosting walk- and bike-to-school events as part of Strive Not to Drive Week. The events provide an opportunity for students and parents to get out of their cars and hit the pavement in an effort to support healthier kids and communities.

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Many schools across Buncombe County support students walking and biking to school, from hosting weekly “walking school buses” to advocating for infrastructure improvements such as better-connected sidewalk networks, to starting a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. SRTS programs are sustained efforts by families, schools, community leaders, and local, state, and federal governments to enable and encourage children to safely walk or bicycle to school through education, community partnerships, and infrastructure improvements. Gibbie Harris, Buncombe County Health Director reports, “In today’s busy world getting enough exercise is a challenge and we need to help make getting physical activity easier for families. Walking or biking to school does just that, making the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity easy, safe and fun.”

Daily exercise reduces a child’s risk of developing obesity and chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease and has been linked with improved academic performance, less depression and anxiety . Walking and biking to school also reduces air pollution and traffic congestion, increases a sense of community, and reconnects students with nature by allowing them more time outdoors. If you’re interested in exploring a safe routes program at your school contact Terri March at 828-250-5047 or terri.march@buncomecounty.org.

Walk and Bike to School Schedule of Events

Questions about these events should be directed to Emily Kujawa at 415-351-9641 or eakujawa@gmail.com.

Francine Delany New School

- **Monday, May 13th, 7:45am: Group walk to school**

Students will walk as a group led by adults along Brevard Road to the school between 7:45 and 8:15am. Francine Delany New School for Children is located at 119 Brevard Road in West Asheville.

Evergreen Community Charter School

- Events encouraging students to use alternative transportation modes to school will be occurring all week long. These events include:
 - **Monday, May 13:** “Bike Fashion Day”
 - **Daily:** An Evergreen staff member at the downtown bus station every morning at 7:15 to meet students who want to ride the bus to school together.
 - **Daily:** Strive Not to Drive announcements given by the 6th grade Green Team over the school PA system.
 - **Daily:** Morning muffins and “Footprint” stickers for students to show how they are reducing their carbon footprint by taking alternative transportation modes to school.

Woodfin Elementary School

- **Tuesday, May 14th, 7:30am:** Walking school bus

Students will meet at the Woodfin Community Center (11 Community Street, Woodfin, NC) and will walk in a group led by adults to the school.

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Hominy Valley Elementary School

- **Wednesday, May 15, 7:00am:** Bicycle trains
Students will meet at 2 locations for group bicycle rides (bicycle train) led by adults. Bikes will depart from the Hominy Valley Sports Park and the tennis courts by Biltmore Lake.

Black Mountain Primary and Elementary Schools

- **Wednesday, May 15, 7:30am: First Baptist Church walking school bus**
A walking school bus to both Black Mountain Primary and Elementary Schools will depart at 7:30am from the First Baptist Church at Montreat Road and First Street. Families who live too far from the schools to walk the entire way can park at the church parking lot and join the walking school bus from there.
- **Wednesday, May 15, 7:15am onward: Flat Creek Greenway walking school buses**
Volunteers will be stationed on the greenway beginning at 7:15am to lead 'Walking School Bus' to the Primary and Elementary Schools.
- **Wednesday, May 15, 7:45-8:30am: Parent Coffee Social**
Coffee and snacks for parents will be served on the Flat Creek Greenway just off Charlotte Street behind the Primary School. Learn about the Safe Routes to School program and network with other parents interested in walking and biking to school. Every parent receives a "My Kid Walks to School" travel mug!

Rainbow Mountain Children's School

- **Daily:** Encouragement and recognition for students who bike or walk to school, or are more "earth friendly" in commuting to school.

ABOUT SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

SRTS programs are sustained efforts by families, schools, community leaders, and local, state, and federal governments to enable and encourage children to safely walk or bicycle to school through education, community partnerships, and infrastructure improvements. SRTS programs examine conditions around schools and conduct projects and activities that work to improve safety and accessibility, and reduce traffic and air pollution in the vicinity of schools. As a result, these programs help make bicycling and walking to school safer and more appealing transportation choices thus encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age. To learn more about Safe Routes to School at <http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/>.

STRIVE NOT TO DRIVE WEEK

Strive Not to Drive (SNTD) began 22 years ago as Bike to Work Day with the goal of encouraging bicycle commuting in Buncombe County. Over the years as concerns about air quality, physical inactivity and related health concerns, and traffic congestion have grown; the event has broadened to encourage any form of transportation other than driving alone in your car. We hope you will join us in this year's event as we increase awareness about how transportation choices affect our health, air quality and quality of life in Buncombe County. This year's SNTD week is May 12 - 18, 2013. Learn more at StriveNotToDrive.org.

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