

# BACK TO SCHOOL

PARENTS FOR SAFE ROUTES | 2018 NEWSLETTER

## WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL

Parents for Safe Routes has been busy since our launch in early 2017! Together with our partners in Menlo Park and surrounding areas, we are actively creating a community in which each child can walk or bike to school safely. Read more about our accomplishments and join our efforts.



## SAFE ROUTES IN MENLO PARK

**City-Wide Safe Routes to School Program Underway** - Due to our lobbying efforts, the City of Menlo Park prioritized and recently kicked off a city-wide Safe Routes to School Program. The City will be creating updated walk and roll maps for each school, putting together a team of stakeholders to address Safe Routes issues and more. We'll be there supporting the efforts. Stay tuned!

**Bike Education Revamped** - This past Spring did you see kids biking around Menlo Park as part of a formal bike education program? Parents for Safe Routes was involved in two events that took kids into the streets to have them learn and practice bike safety skills. One was the Hillview Bike Rodeo led by the MPPD and the other was part of a Wheel Kids-led scavenger hunt donated by Parents for Safe Routes for the annual MPAEF auction.



**Bike Lanes, Sidewalks & Crossing Guards** - Parents for Safe Routes continues to identify areas around town in need of safety improvements and to advocate for those changes. Please subscribe to our mailing list (info below) so that you can stay updated and receive action alerts when a show of support from our group is needed.

## PARENTS FOR SAFE ROUTES WINS AWARD

The Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC) recognized Parents for Safe Routes as the 2018 "Program of the Year." In selecting us, SVBC highlighted our parent volunteers, commitment to bike education and advocacy efforts. This award strengthens our resolve and hopefully serves as a call to others to join our cause. Thanks to everyone in the community for your support.



Members of the Parents for Safe Routes Leadership Team conduct a parent drop-off safety reminder campaign with MPPD and Hillview Staff.

Photo by Robb Most for *InMenlo*; used with permission

## WHEN CAN A CHILD BIKE TO SCHOOL ALONE?

Many experts agree that kids start to develop the cognitive maturity to bike without adult supervision around age 10. While some Menlo Park schools provide bike education (and we're working to get more to do so), it is each family's responsibility to prepare their own child, starting at a very young age, to navigate the streets safely. Only once a child has demonstrated a mastery of safety skills and reached a certain maturity level are they ready to commute to school alone.

### Readiness Checklist

#### Does your child...?

- Follow rules — Ride with traffic, stop bike at stop signs, look L-R-L and use proper hand signals.
- Stay aware — No texting or talking on cell phones while riding or listening to music with headphones.
- Ride predictably — No swerving in and out of cars. Kids riding in groups should ride single file.
- Have the right gear — Wear a helmet (bright ones are best), have air in tires and check brakes. Also wear reflective items and have lights for the front and back of bikes.
- Have a safety plan — Know what to do in case of a collision or other incident while riding.
- Resist peer pressure — Stick to what is taught (safety rules, identified route, proper behavior).



#### Have you...?

- Practiced riding with your child, pointing out potential hazards and coaching them on riding skills.
- Biked with your child along school commute, both before school starts and for a while once it has. Road conditions can change drastically once school is back in session, and it's important for parents to get a good sense of the traffic.
- Evaluated the readiness of your child. Try following far behind your child to see how they do when not with you.

Need help? Organizations such as Wheel Kids, Y Bikes and Avid 4 Adventure offer hands-on bike education.

## FRIENDLY REMINDERS WHEN DRIVING TO SCHOOL

We know biking, walking, busing and carpooling is not always an option. When you drive, please remember:

- **Remain stopped for a school bus** as long as the red lights flash or the stop arm is out. If you don't stop for the bus when the red lights flash, you can be fined up to \$1,000 and your license can be suspended up to a year.
- **Only drop off or pick up your child in designated areas** and avoid u-turns around schools, especially in carlines.
- **Do not use cell phones** when in the carline and pay attention to the traffic and children. Texts and calls can wait.

**PARENTS FOR SAFE ROUTES** is a Menlo Park-based advocacy group that is committed to getting kids to school safely. We're working with schools, municipal leaders and community members to build a Safe Routes to School partnership and drive change. Our goal is to help every kid have the option of biking, walking, or taking an active form

of transportation to school. We also support carpooling and busing to reduce the number of cars on the road. Having Safe Routes to School not only makes the roads safer for kids, but it also improves the quality of life for everyone by reducing traffic congestion and creating friendlier neighborhoods.