

KIDS ABOUT



Volume I, Issue III

Summer 2010

President's Message:

Welcome,

As the President of Look Out Kids About and a former Nevada State PTA President I recognize the important role "Safe Routes to School" plays in a successful school experience for Nevada's Youth. Close partnerships between parents, students, schools, local governmental agencies and advocacy groups such as ours help to bring this about. By decreasing the number of accidents in and around our school zones we can better ensure our children will return home safe to their families every day.

Thanks to the efforts of incredibly dedicated Board and Committee Members, we have seen many improvements through legislation, better infrastructure, education and communication. Despite all this hard work the Las Vegas Valley is not fatality free. Look Out Kids About continues to reach out to the motoring public with key messages toward changing driver behavior and working with the Clark County School District to better educate everyone about safety issues.

You will see our digital Billboards in August reminding everyone when school is back in session. Families at many schools will receive our safety info handouts for parents and students. Every Metro Crossing Guard in Clark County will have a new rechargeable flashing stop paddle to use due to a partnership grant between Look Out Kids About and the City of Las Vegas.



Though we might have become lax over the summer months in noticing school zones and watching for pedestrians and bikers, we must now be extra diligent and remember to look out kids are about! We all must use every measure of care anywhere around schools.

If you would like to join LOKA, please let us know via an e-mail. If you find our efforts and accomplishments interesting and would like more in-depth information, please contact us at 702-884-2783 or visit our website at www.lookoutkidsabout.org. Let's all work together to ensure safe routes for Nevada's children going to and from school to make 2010-11 an accident-free school year.

Sincerely,

Robin Munier,
President of Look Out Kids About

Our Vision:

Create an environment where more kids are walking/biking to and from school safely.

Our Mission:

As a "commUNITY" we need to come together to change the culture of poor driver behavior in school zones, along school walking/biking routes, and near school bus stops by:

- Educating drivers to improve driving habits.
- Educating kids to instill safe walking/biking habits.
- Creating a mutual respect between pedestrians and drivers

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How Do Visually Impaired Children Walk to School?

Imagine you can't see. Now imagine walking to school. Could you even get down your street safely? There are approximately 55,000 children in the US who are visually impaired and all of them need to get to school and eventually to work. How do we get them there safely?

There is a myth that children who are visually impaired become gifted in other senses. In actuality, these children learn to use other senses as tools to navigate the world around them. At about age three, children with visual impairments are eligible to receive orientation and mobility training in school as part of their IEP, or Individual Education Plan. Sounds, textures, scents, and things like the direction the sun is shining become guides. Like a map made of every sense except sight, clues are all around – the sound of traffic flow, the band playing down the hall at school, the smell of gas at a nearby gas station, and even the bumpy texture of the brick wall just before their own driveway. Orientation and mobility training is essential to anyone with a vision impairment to gain independence of movement.

Even with the heightened use of senses, individuals with visual impairments must be extremely cautious at intersections. Accessible Pedestrian Signals or APS devices are installed in some cities to help. In a recent interview, Janet M. Barlow, Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist of Accessible Design for the Blind in Asheville, North Carolina, told me that the older types of APS devices make a cuckoo sound for north/south crossings and a chirp for east/west crossings (except in Salt Lake City, where they are installed in the opposite directions). These signals, mounted overhead, were loud and disturbing to pedestrians, blind and sighted, and to nearby neighbors. She also told me about a newer type, now specified by the federal government, that is mounted at the pedestrian pushbutton. Information on this new type can be found at the Federal Highway Administration websites noted at the end of this article. The Pedestrian Forum, a newsletter found at one of the links, states:

Older types of loud audible pedestrian signals that provided birdcalls from overhead speakers

didn't work well for people who are blind and were annoying to neighbors. New types of APS don't sound like birds and are not generally mounted on the pedestrian signal head and are more easily integrated into neighborhoods. The Access Board's *Draft Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines* specify a different kind of APS, generally known as pushbutton-integrated APS. These APS provide a pushbutton locator tone to help people who are blind find the pushbutton, a tactile arrow to indicate the alignment of the crosswalk, and both vibrotactile (vibrating) and audible walk indications. All sounds come from the pushbutton location. Placing the APS close to the crosswalk it signals is important to recognizing the correct walk indication (see photos). The recommended walk indication is a rapid ticking sound during the walk interval, if APS are installed in the recommended locations.



The volume of pushbutton-integrated APS typically adjusts in response to ambient sound, so the locator tone and walk indication are louder when traffic volume is heavy and quieter when traffic is light. The volume settings often need to be adjusted during installation to fit the location, since sound can be reflected by nearby buildings and objects. Both the pushbutton locator tone and walk indication should be audible from the beginning of the crosswalk, but are not supposed to be heard more than 6 to 12 feet from the pushbutton.

(Continued on page 4)



Guidelines for Good Pedestrian Behavior

It is critical that parents understand their child's limitations. Parents need to educate their children on safe walking skills. Skills that will take them into adulthood, that being said we must remember that children are not small adults. It will take time and practice for a child to develop the ability to deal with lots of traffic. Over time, children develop the ability to accurately judge the speed and distance of oncoming traffic. However this is not an overnight accomplishment.

Young children may think that a car is able to stop for them, when in fact drivers today are not focused on what is around them. Also, children may think that if they can see a driver, the driver can see them. With increasing driver inattention we need to educate children that drivers won't or don't see them. Children are smaller and harder for drivers to see. Especially if a driver is in an SUV, parents need to get down to a child's height to experience their perspective and see what they see. Parents please remember no child stands a chance against a vehicle.

GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN

- Look both ways before crossing (Stop, Look left, Look right, Look left again)
- Walk, never run in a crosswalk or across the street
- Cross only at safe corners, even if you have to walk farther
- Choose the route with fewest streets to cross
- When possible, cross streets at the crosswalk and where there are traffic signs and signals
- Obey traffic signs and signals
- Face traffic when walking on roads without sidewalks
- Watch for turning cars
- Never walk between parked cars
- Refuse to ride with strangers

(From the U.S. Department of Transportation)



GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

Here are some of the reasons parents need to educate children to ensure safe walking habits are instilled:

- Children are not small adults. They often act before thinking and may not do what parents or drivers expect. They assume that if they see the driver, the driver sees them. They have one-third narrower side vision, can't judge speed and are less able to determine the direction of sounds. They are shorter than adults and can't see or been seen over cars, bushes and other objects. (NHTSA)
- A pedestrian struck by a car traveling at 40 mph has a 15 percent chance of survival. At 20 mph there is an 85 percent chance of survival. (U.S. Department of Transportation)
- Fifty percent of children who are hit by cars near schools are hit by cars driven by parents of other students. (Washington State Department of Transportation)
- Twenty to twenty-five percent of morning traffic is parents driving their children to school. (Department of Environment and Transport Regions, London, England; Marin CMA)

(Continued from page 2)

This is good news for children with visual impairments. Recent high-school graduate, Tom Almer, told me that he did not feel comfortable crossing with the sounds the older APS. He felt that identifying which intersection the sound was coming was difficult. "Traffic flow sounds help more than the crosswalk sounds," he said. He suggested that if the person knew which compass direction made which sound, it might be better, but it could still be confusing. The new APS signals would eliminate these problems altogether.

I also interviewed Tom's mother, Darlene Almer. She told me that even though Tom has had formal training in traveling on his own, she worries about his safety. She described some of the precautions he uses: instead of asking people on the street for help, he stops in at a business and asks, he carries a cell phone, and receives route training to ensure that he can get to school, work, etc. Recently, Tom received a grant to purchase a handheld talking GPS unit that will assist him in finding places. With this device, he can click on category "Food" or "Shopping" and it will tell him everything within a 5-mile radius. Once he chooses his destination, the device senses where he is and tells him how far to walk, where to turn, etc. Other tools that allow children with visual impairments more independence are various electronic path finders, laser-canes, and guide dogs. Guide dogs can be especially helpful. Click on the links at the end of this story for more information

on these helpful tools.

The bottom line in this issue is that parents of children with visual impairments want to ensure independence with safety. This is a dilemma we all face when we send our kids out to walk to school (or anywhere) without us. Independence with safety... it is something to think about, plan for, constantly monitor and modify to insure that our kids, those with sight, those visually impaired and those with other disabilities are safe, confident, and self-sufficient.

[FHWA Intersection Safety Brief](http://www.guidedogs.com)

<http://www.guidedogs.com>

<http://www.seeingeye.org/>

<http://www.guidedogsofamerica.org>

http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/pedforum/



By Laura Nelson

We have very sad news to convey to our readers. On April 26, 2010, Nathaniel Miller was tragically killed while riding his bike on Warm Springs Rd. He was only 13 yrs old. He was on his way to Brown Middle School in the City of Henderson. Nathaniel had many interests. He liked cars, country and rock music. He was looking forward to playing football and wrestling. He loved boxing with his Grandmother. But most of all he loved his family. He had many dreams; the first was to go to college in Oklahoma. He had an interest in the Armed Forces and finally to become a Police Officer. His friends and family will greatly miss him. Nathaniel's life was cut too short; the world will miss his shining light.

By Lisa McKeon, Editor

What Has Kids About Been Up To?

National Night Out

National night out in Henderson August 3, 2010 from 5-8:30pm at the events plaza on Water Street, downtown City of Henderson was a blast with many local entities attending involved with safety and education. Kids About was there for the second year in a row.

LOKA Special Thank You

On April 20, 2010 at City of Henderson City Hall, Look Out Kids About dedicated awards to COH for creating an environment where more school children are walking and biking to and from school safely, recognizing the Mayor and City Council for the City's partnership with the our safety coalition, and John Penuelas, Traffic Engineer, for his contributions to the coalition. The awards were engraved; "Look Out Kids About would like to acknowledge the outstanding dedication the City of Henderson has in regards to the traffic safety needs of children in the Henderson community. Look Out Kids About would like to extend deep appreciation and thanks to John Penuelas for his generous support of engineering traffic safety issues for the children within the Henderson community."

Save the Date

- August 23rd Kids About billboards are activated and will run for four weeks. Let's know if you see them and what you think of them either by emailing us at secretary@lookoutkidsabout.org or leave us a message on our Facebook page.
- August 24th CCSD and local entities officially turn on ALL school zone flashers in Clark County for the up coming school year.
- August 30th FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL FOR ALL CCSD SCHOOLS!
- September 6th No School (Labor Day).
- September 15th Kids About Monthly General Public Input and Executive Board Meeting.
- October 6th International Walk to School Day, for more information please visit our website www.lookoutkidsabout.org or www.walktoschool.org and register your school.

Yes, We Are Still On Facebook!

Heads up to Facebook fan's. Yes we are on Facebook! *Look Out Kids About* has a fan page and would love for everyone join us. We cannot believe how fast our fan base has grown. We are now up to 110 fans and we have only been on since early February. We are posting weekly "Safety Tips", events, meetings, newsletters, and comments about traffic safety. If you have any questions please contact us on Facebook or on our website, lookoutkidsabout.org Once again for THANK YOU for helping make our communities safer!

LOKA Billboard Campaign

If you get a chance check out our new Billboard campaign it will be up and running from August 25 through the month of September. Look Out Kids About is reminding drivers kids are back to school and displaying our website for more information. Thanks to Clear Channel Outdoor Co, Kids About is able to reach drivers all over the Las Vegas valley with our digital safety messages.

By Lisa McKeon, Editor

Safe Summer Nights

Safe Summer Nights at the John C. Kish Boys and Girls Club in Henderson July 10, 2010 from 5-8pm was a great success. Kids About handed out our fact sheets on walking and biking safety and was able to raffle off a new bike and helmet.



*Kids About
Newsletter
Created by:*

Brandyn Dente
Writer/Editor

Lisa McKeon
Editor

Laura Nelson
Layout/Design

Lonnie Wilborn
Writer

Gina Wilborn
Writer