

Walk to School Week: March 20-24, 2023

By Donna Sievers



Mark your calendars and join the walkers to Horace Mann Elementary School on March 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24.

You might ask, “**WHY** should we walk our kids to school?” Or, you might say, “It’s too far.” Or “I’m too busy...too tired...too rushed.”

But did you know that walking your child to and from school is a healthier way to transport your child and will benefit both child and parent? Here is what walking to and from school can do:

1. Increases activity for both the parent and the child.
 2. Increases social skills in children.
 3. Helps children gain independence.
 4. Allows children to walk in their own neighborhood.
 5. Benefits cognitive and academic performance.
- countyhealthrankings.org

During Walk to School week, Horace Mann Elementary will be introducing two opportunities to help decrease traffic concerns at the school by helping organize the “Walking School Bus” (WSB) and carpools.

If you have never heard of a Walking School Bus, please keep reading. I first saw a Walking School Bus at my grandson’s elementary school in Boulder, Colorado on a cold, snowy day. One parent was in front and four or five kids (they looked like ducklings) followed in a line with another parent chaperone at the end of the line. These parents rotated the responsibility and thus only needed

to walk their child or children to school one time a week instead of five times per week. The Walking School Bus started about a half mile away, and followed a specific route and time to pick up the next child on the route who was waiting outside for the “bus” to arrive. You can monitor your child as they walk to school on the Walking School Bus, which proactively addresses parent concerns. See guide.saferoutesinfo.org.

During the week of March 20-24, there will be opportunities to learn more about the Walking School Bus and informal carpools. Please join the Bluff Heights Neighborhood Association, the Rose Park Neighborhood Association, and the Horace Mann PTA to participate with other families in the neighborhood.



At the end of the week, students who have walked to school will be able to participate in special events, and there will be two bikes to raffle off. In addition, **Olympian road bike rider Tony Cruz** will join students at Horace Mann to share his Olympic experience and bike-riding safety guidelines. More information to follow...but don’t forget to mark your calendars!

Donna Sievers is a Board Member of the Los Angeles Area Helicopter Noise Coalition (LAAHNC). She was raised in Long Beach and taught at Stanford Junior High, Bolsa Grande High, Pacifica High, and CSULB before leaving the classroom for administrator duties in Garden Grove USD. She and her husband live in Bluff Heights, where their retirement activities include volunteering for the Joyful Child Foundation in Memory of Samantha Runnion, gardening at the Bembridge House, bike riding, walking to the ocean, and maintaining a 107-year-old house and garden.