

Walk Nashville Week October 2-10, 1999

The *Healthy Nashville* Community Health and Wellness Team collaborated with "Walk/Bike Nashville", the Kim Dayani Center of Vanderbilt University, and The Nashville Sports Council to conduct a week of walking in Nashville.

October 2 was the international "Global Embrace" walk, where senior adults were encouraged to walk and exercise, all over the world. Here in Nashville, approximately 250 seniors came out to the Vanderbilt track and to several Senior centers around the city. At the Kim Dayani Center, a breakfast of cappuccino and bagels was served before the walk to the track, where participants were led in stretching exercises and a one-mile walk. T-shirts were given to all the walkers. This was the grand finale of the World Health Organization's "Year of Active Aging" initiative.

October 6 was "Walk our Children to School Day". The purpose of the day was to encourage families to walk for exercise, to emphasize safety for pedestrians, and to draw attention to areas that are not "walker friendly" due to cracked sidewalks, broken glass, blocked sidewalks, etc. Five schools joined the event, with a total of 1500 parents and children participating. Local dignitaries came to the five schools, walked with the children, and spoke briefly at an assembly. Mayor Bill Purcell and Vice-Mayor Ronnie Steine participated. Dr. Stephanie Bailey walked with children at Cockrill Elementary. Healthy breakfast foods were served to the walkers at each school.

The Hunters Lane String Band played as the walkers arrived at Eakin School. Two schools used yellow rope to create "Walking School Buses", by having the children to walk in a straight line and hold on to the rope, as a safety measure. Parents and children took pictures of unsafe sidewalks and traffic hazards. Some of these pictures are posted at www.walkbikenashville.com The team is planning to expand the event to many by working with the Metro PE teachers.

The final event was October 10, "Titan Fans Walk to the Game". Distances were measured from 10 parking lots or garages to the stadium. Banners were placed in five of those parking lots that identified the walking distance to the game. Volunteers stood at the Woodland Street Bridge and handed out 2500 stickers that read "I Walked to the Game Today". The participants seemed to enjoy wearing their stickers and receiving encouragement from the volunteers for walking.

A total of 250 senior adults, 1500 parents and children, and more than 2500 sports fans participated in the first "Walk Nashville Week". Walk Nashville Week is expected to draw even more participation the second year, October 2000.