



# Active Michigan Communities

Late Summer 2007

## Welcome

Physical activity can truly unite communities. I've never seen stronger evidence of this than I did last weekend when my colleague Sarah Panken and I ran the Crim in Flint. During the 10 mile event, we passed the University of Michigan-Flint campus and the impressive Flint Farmer's Market, and ran through the revitalizing downtown core and into many diverse neighborhoods. In every location, people were standing (or sitting, dancing, clapping) along the way cheering on all the runners. Some were shouting words of encouragement; others were providing water relief in the form of ice chips, drinks and hoses. Music carried us from start to finish including a school drum corps and a marching band, "garage bands" and a choir as well as neighbors playing boom boxes along the way. People shouted at long-time favorites and carried signs for their running relative/friend. Not only did the participants experience the joy of physical activity, the entire community demonstrated what research shows is a key to successfully embracing healthy lifestyles...social support. From new runners (like me) to seasoned runners (like Sarah and many others there), everyone felt encouraged and inspired. And that included those who didn't participate. We heard many say "Maybe next year I'll do that." The joy of physical activity is contagious. So, as we anticipate Michigan's beautiful color-changing fall season, be sure you keep holding the torch for active, healthy communities. Embrace walking and biking to school, continue improving facilities for bike lanes, advocate for equitable access to your community's recreational facilities and add some physical activity into your own daily routine. We're cheering you on!

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## Community Spotlight: Cadillac

The City of Cadillac is working on many projects that will result in a community that is more conducive to active transportation (i.e., walking and bicycling); thereby helping residents to incorporate physical activity into their daily routine. Highlighted below are two of the project Cadillac is currently working on to help the community become a model of active living:



- The Cadillac community has received funding to initiate the Mitchell Street project in 2009. This project will allow for the re-design of 1.4 miles of Mitchell Street, which runs through the core of the city. The project goals include fostering pedestrian safety, creating traffic calming, and improving aesthetics. These improvements will not only make the downtown environment more conducive for physical activity, but they could also enhance economic activity in the downtown.
- Clam River Greenway project is an ongoing multi-year initiative to create a 1 mile trail that links the Cadillac community with the lakefront, schools, downtown and provides safe access to the local sports park. The Greenway will also provide a much needed link between other local trails, including the White Pine Trail. Currently, the trail is approximately 2/3 complete and when finished it will give walkers, bicyclists, skateboarders, and outdoor enthusiasts an opportunity to get out and be physically active.

Cadillac is clearly taking important steps to encourage its residents to be more physically active. If you would like more information about what Cadillac is doing to be an active community, visit <http://www.cadillac-mi.net/>.

## Michigan Communities to be Recognized as Models of Active Living



In October, Michigan communities will be recognized for using innovative approaches to become models of active living. These communities will receive the 2007 Promoting Active Communities Award for their efforts to create and maintain an environment in which it is safe, convenient and fun for residents to integrate physical activity into their daily routine.

To be eligible for the award, communities evaluate their built environment, policies, and programs related to promoting and supporting physical activity using the Promoting Active Communities online self-assessment. This unique tool was created in partnership with the Michigan Department of Community Health, the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Michigan State University, and the Prevention Research Center of Michigan so that communities can better understand their status as an active community and more efficiently remove barriers to active living, thereby increasing physical activity opportunities for residents. Assessment questions address topics such as community planning, recreation and bicycle facilities, public transportation, and strategies schools and worksites use to encourage physical activity.

Since 2000, over 90 Michigan communities in 40 counties have completed the online self-assessment and used the associated personalized community feedback report for planning purposes. "The communities that participate in the Promoting Active Communities Program inspire other Michigan communities to consider using innovative community planning and design approaches to not only increase opportunities for physical activity but to also increase the overall quality of life for residents" said Janet Olszewski, Director of the Michigan Department of Community Health. "The award allows them to showcase their unique approaches to create more active, livable, and economically viable communities." Any city, township, charter township or village in the state of Michigan can complete the assessment and be eligible for an award.

The five levels of recognition are defined as:

- **Copper:** Communities have made a commitment to becoming a healthier place to live and have begun to take steps toward removing barriers to physical activity.
- **Bronze:** Communities have taken important steps toward making it easy for people to be active.
- **Silver:** Communities have achieved significant progress toward making it easy for people to be active.
- **Gold:** Communities can document outstanding achievements in making it easy for people to be active.
- **Platinum:** Communities are models of commitment to healthy, active living.

Michigan communities who will be honored for their achievements include:

- |                            |                     |                       |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| • Birmingham               | • Ishpeming         | • Montague            |
| • Cadillac                 | • Kalkaska          | • Novi                |
| • Charlotte                | • Lansing           | • Portland            |
| • Detroit                  | • Manistee          | • Saline              |
| • Focus: Hope Neighborhood | • Marquette         | • Traverse City       |
| • Dundee                   | • Menominee         | • Watervliet Township |
| • Garfield Township        | • Meridian Township | • Ypsilanti           |
| • Gladstone                | • Midland           |                       |

Please note that at the time of publication, the award levels had not yet been designated.

The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness coordinates the Promoting Active Communities Program because it encourages Michigan communities to take steps to ensure that residents can integrate physical activity into their daily routine. For more information, call (800) 434-8642 or visit [www.michiganfitness.org](http://www.michiganfitness.org).

## Van Buren Township is “Igniting Motivation to Play!”

**By Jennifer Morris, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation for Van Buren Township**

Van Buren Township Parks and Recreation Department is now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year of sponsoring “Takin’ it to the Streets,” a program designed to provide physical activity opportunities for children of all ages from Van Buren Township and the surrounding area. The whole day is focused on children to get them up and moving.

Funds to support “Takin’ it to the Streets” are provided by a Community Development Block Grant through Wayne County. To use this grant money, there are requirements that must be followed, such as hosting the event in a low-income area. With this grant money, t-shirts and lunch are available for all who participate.

The event is located next to an apartment complex full of children who may not otherwise be exposed to interactive physical activity experiences. For example, some of these children may belong to families that are not able to enroll them in camp for the summer; so many spend their summer days walking around, “hanging out” in the apartment complex or babysitting their younger siblings inside. Providing this unique opportunity for interactive play, “Takin’ it to the Streets” gives children an opportunity to exercise minds as well as bodies and allows children to build essential social skills.



Inflatables are a mainstay of the event and definitely a crowd pleaser. Each year we add new components to the event. Last year, Van Buren Township invited Johnnie Williams, a motivational speaker, to present at “Takin it to the Streets.” Mr. Williams discussed his experiences growing up, his professional career in basketball and what he is doing now after his injury. His presentation was an inspiration to all those who feel they can’t make something of themselves.



This year, the Van Buren Township Police Department were on-hand to demonstrate bike safety. They gave the children rules for riding their bikes, pumped up their tires, oiled their chains and showed the children working with the police is a “good thing.”

## Bicycle Facilities Training



In mid-August, the Michigan Department of Transportation sponsored training on the planning and design of on-road bicycle facilities. More than 95 engineers, planners, public health professionals, parks and recreation professionals, bicycle advocates, and interested citizens took this opportunity to learn about bicycle facility design and think about how to apply these concepts in their hometowns. The classes were held in 5 different Michigan communities and were taught by John LaPlante, a transportation engineer in Chicago and one of the principal authors of the American

Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) guide for the development of bicycle facilities. In addition to the two hours of in class instruction on the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, participants actually got out and rode their bicycles to see examples of good and bad bicycle facility design. The class was designed to accommodate all levels of cyclists; so even infrequent bicycle riders were able to participate. There were many stops during the ride to point out bicycle facility designs and to discuss how each bicycle facility was designed and whether improvements could be made. After the bicycle ride, the group discussed what was experienced during the on-road portion and how they could apply the AASHTO bicycle facilities design concepts to the work they are doing in their community. For more information about this program or non-motorized transportation facility design, please contact Josh DeBruyn, non-motorized transportation coordinator for the Michigan Department of Transportation at (517) 355-2918 or DeBruynJ@michigan.gov.

## Walk to School Day

**What:** Walk to School Day is a one-day event that encourages students, parents and community members to celebrate the many benefits of walking. International Walk to School Day is scheduled for Wednesday, October 3. If this date does not work for your school, simply choose an alternate date in October; the entire month of October has been officially designated as “International Walk to School Month.” Walk to School Day began mid-1990s in the United Kingdom and is now celebrated in over 35 countries. Last year in Michigan, over 260 schools participated in this event.

**Why:** Schools and communities participate in Walk to School Day for a variety of reasons, including:

- To promote the health benefits of walking and to encourage physical activity
- To highlight the simple pleasure of walking or bicycling to school
- To raise awareness about safety hazards on the way to school
- To reduce traffic congestion, pollution, and speed near schools
- To build parent and community support for Safe Routes to School

**To have a successful Walk to School Day, a school should:**

- **Get permission** from the principal.
- **Identify** a Walk to School Day coordinator.
- **Build** a Walk to School Day team.
- **Choose** a date for your event (if October 3 is not practical).
- **Register** your school
- **Announce** Walk to School Day at parent meetings, in the school newsletter, and on the school website.
- **Distribute** flyers to students and parents and mail invitations to other community members.
- **Send** out a press release.
- **Recruit** volunteers to help lead the walk.

**Register Your School Today For...**

# Walk to School Day

**Wednesday, October 3, 2007**  
(or any day in October)



**Registered schools will receive these free materials:**

- Stickers for all participants
- Certificate of participation for all schools
- Web-based resources for planning and publicity
- Options for schools where most students are bussed
- Information on how your school can begin a comprehensive Safe Routes to School program

**Please be sure to register if you plan to participate!**  
To register, call 1-800-434-8642 or visit [www.saferoutesmichigan.org](http://www.saferoutesmichigan.org)







**Let WALK TO SCHOOL DAY be your school's FIRST STEP in a SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL program!**  
Call 1-800-434-8642 or visit [www.saferoutesmichigan.org](http://www.saferoutesmichigan.org) for more details



For more information about Michigan's Safe Routes to School program, call (800) 434-8642 or visit:

[www.saferoutesmichigan.org](http://www.saferoutesmichigan.org).

## Safe Routes to School Training

Walk to School Day is a **great** way to introduce the Safe Routes to School (SR2S) program to the community. If you would like to learn more about the SR2S program, you can enroll now for SR2S training.



**September 26: Bay City**  
**September 29: Detroit**  
**October 11: Battle Creek**  
**October 18: Kalkaska**

- No fee to attend.
- Pre-enrollment for training is required.
- To enroll, please call or e-mail Alex Nikoloff at the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, (800) 434-8642, [anikoloff@michiganfitness.org](mailto:anikoloff@michiganfitness.org). Be sure to indicate your location preference in your e-mail.
- Training begins at 8:30am and ends at 4:00pm.
- Space is limited and sessions fill up fast, so enroll today!

Brought to you by:



## Be Inspired at the 1st Safe Routes to School National Conference

The 1<sup>st</sup> Safe Routes to School National Conference: *Creating, Building, Sustaining Momentum*, presented by the National Center for Safe Routes to School and the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, will be held November 5 – 7, 2007 at the historic Dearborn Inn in Dearborn, Michigan. The opening program and dinner will be held at the internationally renowned Henry Ford Museum. The named keynote speakers will motivate and inspire:

**Coach Herman Boone**, whose inspirational story was captured in the Disney film "Remember the Titans" starring Academy Award-winner Denzel Washington, will be the opening speaker for the conference Monday evening at the Henry Ford Museum. The setting is fitting because the Museum was built to pay tribute to American innovation and chronicle the tales of people whose vision and boldness changed the world around them. Boone understands the value of diversity, community involvement and teamwork. His own vision and boldness once united a football team, school, and a Virginia community. In his retirement, Coach Boone continues to motivate and inspire audiences across the country.

**Dr. Catherine O'Brien**, Canada's leading expert on child and youth friendly planning, will present "Planning for Sustainable Happiness" during a lunch keynote on Tuesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>. As a Research Associate of the Centre for Sustainable Transportation, she co-authored "Child and Youth Friendly Land Use and Transport Planning Guidelines." In addition, O'Brien has drawn from the fields of positive psychology and sustainability to develop a new concept: sustainable happiness. She defines this as the pursuit of happiness that is respectful of other people, the natural environment and future generations. Her work emphasizes the significance of creating communities that meet the needs and aspirations of children and planning for sustainable happiness.

Everyone interested in the health and safety of children should attend. The conference will address the unique needs of those in urban, suburban and rural settings.

To register or to learn more about the conference, please visit the conference website at:  
[www.saferoutesmichigan.org/nationalconference.htm](http://www.saferoutesmichigan.org/nationalconference.htm).



## Upcoming Events

### **September 15: Celebrate Cycling**

Join us on the Celebration of Cycling on September 15th! Whether you are a casual neighborhood cyclist, or a seasoned, experienced cyclist, the Celebration of Cycling offers something for you. Routes range from a 12-mile traffic-free jaunt to a scenic century ride. Rest stops including lunch and an ice cream sundae bar at the end are included. Individuals trained through PEAC, Programs to Educate All Cyclists, will be participating and demonstrating their skills as capable community cyclists. PEAC assists individuals with disabilities to become cyclists. Individualized training offers assistance to everyone whether they are just learning to balance on an adult trike or using their bicycles as a primary form of transportation. All proceeds from the Celebration of Cycling benefits PEAC. Registration can be found online at

[www.bikeprogram.org/coc](http://www.bikeprogram.org/coc). Pre-registration is \$18/person and \$36/family, and Day-of registration is \$26/person and \$55/family. For more information, please call 734-484-2758 or email at [info@bikeprogram.org](mailto:info@bikeprogram.org).



### **October 16-17: Michigan's Premier Public Health Conference**

The purpose of this conference is to bring together a comprehensive representation of public health professionals and practitioners to identify strategies and provide direction on how best to improve the health of Michigan's citizens. The event will take place in Dearborn and will focus on a variety of public health topic areas through sessions and workshops. For more information, please visit: <http://www.malph.org/page.cfm/130>.



### **October 17-19: Michigan Association of Planning's Annual Conference**

Improve your skills in and knowledge of land use and planning at the 2007 Michigan Association of Planning's Annual Conference at the Grand Traverse Resort in Acme. The conference is designed to provide educational experiences about a range of land use and planning "hot topics," including healthy, active communities. A conference schedule and registration form is available at: <http://www.planningmi.org/events2269871.asp>



### **February 7-9, 2008: New Partners for Smart Growth**

This conference held in Washington DC will include a dynamic mix of plenary sessions, interactive breakouts, implementation workshops, specialized trainings, and optional tours of local model projects. It will feature the latest on cutting-edge smart growth issues, implementation tools and strategies, best practices, interactive learning experiences, new partners, new projects, and new policies. It will also feature exciting tours of local model projects in the DC area, and other interesting case studies from throughout the region. Most importantly, this dynamic event offers you the opportunity to network and coordinate with your peers as well as practitioners from many different disciplines with the same goal — building safe, healthy, and livable communities for all. For more information, please visit: <http://www.newpartners.org/index.html>.



### **SAVE THE DATE**

*4th Annual Designing Healthy Livable Communities Conference*

May 29-30, 2008

Lansing, Michigan



MICHIGAN FITNESS FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 27187  
Lansing, MI 48909  
Phone: (800) 434-8642  
Fax: (517) 347-8145  
[www.michiganfitness.org](http://www.michiganfitness.org)

## About Us

The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports was established in 1992 to improve the health of, and increase physical activity among, Michigan residents. The Michigan Fitness Foundation was created in 1994 as a 501(c)3 nonprofit public charity foundation to expedite Governor's Council policies and programs and provide a broader funding base to pursue its mission of Getting Michigan Moving. The foundation is licensed by the Michigan Attorney General to solicit and receive charitable gifts and grants (MICS 11523).

## Our Mission

The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports envisions a physically educated population with the knowledge and skills to enjoy a healthy, vigorous and safe lifestyle in communities designed to support physical activity.

## Endorsed Physical Activity Events

Get the Governor's Council's seal of approval on your event! The organization endorses events that encourage physical activity in communities across the state. Physical activity events that range from running races to softball tournaments are eligible to be endorsed by the Governor's Council. Having your event endorsed is free, and gives you additional publicity through the Governor's Council website! Do you have an event that you think could be endorsed by the Governor's Council or do you want to find events that have already been endorsed? Visit <http://www.michiganfitness.org/endorsements/index.php>. If you have questions about the endorsement program, contact Tricia Fraas at (800) 434-8642 or [tfraas@michiganfitness.org](mailto:tfraas@michiganfitness.org).



MICHIGAN FITNESS FOUNDATION

## Resources

**Walkable Communities, Inc.**, The site of this Florida-based organization is dedicated to helping communities become more pedestrian-friendly. It includes articles and suggestions for assessing and improving walkability. For more information, visit: [www.walkable.org](http://www.walkable.org).

**The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Transportation's Intermodal Services Unit.** This office has resources available to provide non-motorized training and guidance on state and national best practices for pedestrian and bicycling facilities, [www.michigan.gov/mdot](http://www.michigan.gov/mdot) or (517) 335-2923

**Nonmotorized Plans and Guidelines.** Many Michigan communities are developing non-motorized plans and guidelines. Find examples for St. Clair County, Kalamazoo, Ann Arbor, and others at: [www.greenwaycollab.com](http://www.greenwaycollab.com).

**Community Transportation Association, [www.ctaa.org](http://www.ctaa.org).** Learn how you can help improve public and community transportation options.

