



February 2015

**Coordinator's Corner**

For the second year in a row, we received an impressive number of Outstanding Crossing Guard Nominations. It's wonderful to hear about the dedicated people in your communities. VDOT staff faced a daunting task when it came to narrowing down the list to the six winners featured in the special edition of our Friends & Faces column below. Thank you to everyone who nominated their crossing guard, but most of all, a heartfelt thank you to all crossing guards for all of the work that you do.



While winter weather may be limiting the number of times you walk and bike to school, February is a great time to be inside planning for the rest of the spring semester and coming year. Two key SRTS-related events happening in the coming months include Earth Day (April 22) and [Bike to School Day \(May 6\)](#). Start planning your Earth Day activities with our [Going Green with Safe Routes to School](#) resource and by registering your Bike to School events at [www.walkbiketoschool.org](http://www.walkbiketoschool.org). Consider applying for a QuickStart Mini-grant to support your spring events. Upcoming due dates are March 12 and April 9.

If you plan to apply for a Non-infrastructure Grant, don't forget to complete your [Activities and Programs Plan](#) by the end of February for VDOT review. The online grant application system will open on March 1, and close on March 31.

In addition, this month the "Did You Know?" column returns with a look at the ways active transportation improves heart health; we unveil a new resource focused on working with law enforcement; and take a look back at the ways getting to school has changed in a fun video.

I hope you enjoy this month's newsletter. If you know someone who should be profiled in the Friends & Faces column for their SRTS work or have a topic you would like to see covered in future editions, please let me know by sending an email to [robertj.williams@vdot.virginia.gov](mailto:robertj.williams@vdot.virginia.gov).

Regards,

Rob Williams  
Virginia SRTS Coordinator

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**CALENDAR**

**FEBRUARY**

- 11: Crossing Guard Appreciation Day
- 12: QuickStart Mini-grant Application Due
- 28: Last day to submit Activities & Programs Plan for optional review

**MARCH**

- 12: QuickStart Mini-grant Application Due
- 31: Non-Infrastructure Grant Application Due

**APRIL**

- 9: QuickStart Mini-grant Application Due
- 22: Earth Day

**MAY**

- 6: Bike to School Day

Let us know about SRTS events in your community!

Click [here](#) to send your information to be included in the calendar.

## Friends & Faces: Virginia's Most Outstanding Crossing Guards of 2014

In conjunction with Crossing Guard Appreciation Day on February 11, parents and schools nominated crossing guards across the state to be recognized as Virginia's Most Outstanding Crossing Guard of 2014. The forty crossing guards nominated this year routinely go above and beyond what is expected and are standout members of their communities.

This month's Friends & Faces column introduces Virginia's six Most Outstanding Crossing Guards of 2014 and the incredible work that they do as told by the parents and other community members who nominated them.

### Sheila Richardson

#### Samuel Tucker Elementary School (Alexandria)

Ms. Sheila Richardson works hard to ensure that everyone arrives at school in a timely manner while maintaining the highest level of safety. She is always willing to help the students and parents, arriving at her post earlier than expected to check the school grounds, and assisting late arrivals in the parent drop off area after she finishes with her crossing guard duties. She is aware of the many events that happen throughout the school day and makes changes to ensure that the school day runs smoothly. Ms. Sheila is a special part of the Tucker Elementary School community. She gives high fives and offers support to nervous children and parents on the first



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day of school. She has contacted police in regards to a stolen bicycle and stayed late to ensure it was recovered. Parents place so much confidence in Ms. Sheila that 2nd and 3rd graders walk from the corner to school independently under her watch. Cold weather is no match for her dedication; Ms. Sheila clears snow and helps walkers navigate their way through the icy areas on their way to school.

### Jeff Covell

#### Nottingham Elementary School (Arlington)

Jeff Covell's presence on 30th Street and N. Ohio Street has become essential each morning and afternoon. The neighborhood is thankful to have him. He knows everybody's names, and always greets us with a big smile. He does an outstanding job as a guard with a strong commitment to safety and has total control of the intersection, giving a friendly wave to every single car that



Jeff Covell has a strong commitment to safety and total control of the intersection, giving a friendly wave to every single car that passes him in the mornings.

passes him in the mornings. He very nicely counsels kids to behave in a safer manner, such as reminding them not to bounce a ball as they cross the street, and will give high fives to toddlers as they go by. The kids and parents alike look forward to seeing him every morning on their way to school, as he never fails to spread good cheer. His positivity is indefatigable and contagious. He greets people by name and is cheerful and upbeat in the foulest of weather. He somehow manages this while being incredibly focused on stopping traffic and keeping pedestrians safe. Safety is always first and foremost.

**Cheryl Belloli**  
Centreville and Union Mill Elementary Schools, Liberty  
Middle School (Centreville)



Cheryl is a superb ambassador for the greater law enforcement community by providing a friendly and positive impression of uniformed officers for our children.

For nine years, Cheryl Belloli has been faithfully serving the Centreville community through rain, sleet, freezing temperatures, and snow as she helps students safely cross busy intersections on their way to school. She keeps our students safe, traffic moving, and is known for greeting everyone by name with a warm smile! Cheryl is not afraid to be assertive when needed, because student safety always comes first. At the same time, she is compassionate and fully engaged with the children and families in a way that is personal and reflective of her genuine interest in their lives. Cheryl serves as a superb ambassador for the greater law enforcement community by providing a friendly and positive impression of uniformed officers for our children. When asked why Cheryl should win the 2015 Crossing Guard of the Year Award, students replied, "We love how she always takes time to talk to me. We love how she always passes out candy canes at Christmas, and she is so much fun!"

**Fred Bobbitt**  
Galax Elementary School (Galax)

After 29 years as a deputy, Officer Fred Bobbitt became a certified school resource officer at Galax Elementary School

for the past two years. Students from pre-K to 4th grade respect him and it shows. Officer Bobbitt knows most students by name, but he isn't afraid to use his adult voice to call them when he must. He is also good for hugs by the kids, chatter about their day and being a friend to all. Ask him and he will tell you, being a crossing guard also gives him the chance to teach safety and gauge any other issues the



His is a positive, encouraging, comforting role model. Just watch student faces light up when they are with him.

students may have. Bobbitt also walks a group of students to the nearby recreation center for an after-school program. Tammy Haga, the program's director said it best, "They adore him. He is a positive, encouraging, comforting role model. Just watch the students' faces light up when they are with him."

**Edie Adcock**  
Wolftrap Elementary School (Vienna)

Edie Adcock has been a crossing guard at Wolftrap Elementary School for 29 years. That equates to over four generations of completely new students who have been guided safely across Beulah Road by Ms. Edie, as she is affectionately known. She is a fixture in the mornings and afternoons, and a friend not just to the students but also the parents, caregivers and others who walk their children to school. She even recognizes parents she crossed 20 years ago. Since 2009, when Wolftrap started its SRTS activities, Ms. Edie has supported us by being a key part of monthly bike trains, weekly Walking Wednesdays and annual Bike/Walk Challenges. During "Snowmageddon" she provided boots-on-the-ground input to move the Kiss-N-Ride, which improved safety by an order of magnitude. She also worked with the bus drivers when this past fall's traffic situation was

compounded by new instructions from FCPD. Her biggest joy is when the monthly bike train rolls by; and how she stops all traffic for every rider on it, be it a trio of riders or a massive group of over 50. Wolftrap is a better and safer place as a result of Ms. Edie's daily presence.



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## Marietta Pierce Antietam and Westridge Elementary Schools, Lake Ridge Middle School (Woodbridge)

Mrs. Pierce is the model crossing guard and has been a beloved part of the Westridge community for 11 years! She executes her duties at such an exemplary level that her professional performance alone should merit recognition. However, Mrs. Pierce also manages to maintain a personal connection with the children that goes above



Mrs. Pierce maintains a personal connection with the children that goes above and beyond the call of duty.

and beyond the call of duty. For over a decade, Mrs. Pierce has served as a stalwart symbol within our community; safeguarding our children and our neighborhood, getting to know kindergartners by name and easing their transition with a friendly and familiar face, and maintaining her unique relationship with the kids to their graduation and beyond. Mrs. Pierce's rare absence never goes without notice or concern, and her return is always warmly welcomed and appreciated by all.

## New Learn it. Do it. Live it! Resource: Working With Law Enforcement

Program staff has put the finishing touches on the latest resource in the Learn it. Do It. Live It! series, Working with Law Enforcement. Law enforcement personnel in your local police or sheriff's department are natural partners for a SRTS program. For example, law enforcement can help direct traffic for special events like Walk/Bike to School Day and many departments have their own Bicycle Patrols that can lead a bike rodeo.

**Learn it. Do it. Live it!**  
**WORKING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**Why Law Enforcement?**  
Community law enforcement agencies such as the local police department or sheriff's office are natural partners to Safe Routes to School efforts and can augment a school's safe routes activities. Law enforcement agencies and SRTS programs all want to encourage safe pedestrian and bicycling behaviors, and both work for motorists to be part of the safety picture around schools. For example, the Williamsburg Police Department is furthering the City's goal of increasing pedestrian and bicycle safety through its work with the school district's Safe Routes to School program. City police officers participate in school SRTS team activities, conduct bicycle safety training, and offer a pedestrian and bicycle course for students to practice safe walking and riding.

**What can Law Enforcement Do for Safe Routes?**  
School SRTS programs benefit from law enforcement officers being involved in three basic ways: being present, providing services, and building positive relationships.

**Be present.** Police officers and especially school resource officers can be part of the every day life of school life by simply being present at school. A police officer, sheriff's deputy, or other law enforcement official at the school can be the point of contact for the school and the broader community. Law enforcement officials can:

- Distribute safety materials at public events
- Support a school's Student Safety Patrol
- Give safety presentations at school

**Who's Present to Speak about SRTS?**  
**School Resource Officers:** School resource officers work in many middle and elementary schools to help with police visibility and presence at school events.

**DARE Officers:** DARE officers work in elementary schools and can help conduct safety education in a variety of topics during class visits, including pedestrian safety.

**Police Bicycle Patrol Unit:** Police departments will often have their own bicycle patrol units, used to provide directed patrols in a community. Officers that are part of a bicycle patrol can receive bicycle training and often conduct bicycle safety training for children in the community.

**As a member of a school's Safe Routes to School team, police officers can offer valuable insights about:**

- Transportation issues facing a community
- Local traffic patterns and areas with a high number of traffic violations
- Bicycle and pedestrian crash information

Check the school has a patrol plan, the officer can help obtain formal endorsement of the plan by the police department.

**Host trainings and events.** Law enforcement agencies can contribute to Safe Routes to School efforts in many ways, including engaging in school partnerships or at the lead for:

- Hosting bicycle rodeos
- Participating in School Walkabouts
- Directing motor vehicle traffic during a Walk to School Day or Bike to School Day
- Conducting helmet giveaways
- Training adults to become crossing guards
- Teaching safe driving for adults

[www.k12va.net/org/safeschools](http://www.k12va.net/org/safeschools)

Read more about how to involve your local law enforcement personnel and find examples from other Virginia communities in the [Working with Law Enforcement LDL](#). Also be sure to check out the other topics in the series in the [Resource Library](#).

## QuickStart Mini-grants

The two remaining spring 2015 Quick Start Mini-grant due dates are:

- March 12
- April 9

Applications are evaluated in the order they are received, so it pays to apply early! You can complete your application [online](#).



*Garland Quarles Elementary School in Winchester used their QuickStart Mini-grant to fund a bicycle safety program.*

Activities funded by \$1000 Mini-grants should help promote safe walking, bicycling, and driving habits, increase the number of students walking and bicycling to school, and occur within 90 days of award. The Virginia Safe Routes to School program encourages applicants to use the creativity of student and adult leaders to identify issues and propose safe walking and bicycling activities to address them. Visit the [QuickStart Mini-grant webpage](#) to see a list of eligible items and learn more about the activities funded to date.

### **Non-Infrastructure Grant Reminder**

#### Important Dates:

- **February 28:** Deadline for optional review of APP
- **March 1:** Online Non-Infrastructure Grant Application system opens for submissions
- **March 31:** Non-Infrastructure Grant Application Due

In January, VDOT announced another round of Non-Infrastructure Grant funding. Non-Infrastructure Grants, for amounts between \$5,000 and \$100,000 can be used to fund education, encouragement, evaluation and enforcement programs related to Safe Routes to School, including funding a SRTS Coordinator to work at the local or school division level. Detailed information about eligible applicants and activities can be found in the [Virginia SRTS Program Guidelines](#).

The first step in applying for a Non-Infrastructure Grant is completing or updating an Activities & Programs Plan (APP). The APP is used to organize programs, projects, and people in support of SRTS, and once completed, it serves as a legacy document for new people becoming part of the SRTS program. The Virginia APP Reference Guide and Template, containing the relevant information needed in order to complete an APP, are available on the [Virginia SRTS website](#).

LTACs will once again be available to review your draft or final APP. APPs will be reviewed as they are received. The APPs submitted via email to the LTACs by **February 28** will be guaranteed a response by March 11, and those submitted well in advance of the deadline will likely have a quicker turnaround time.

The Non-Infrastructure Grant application system will be open for submissions on **March 1**. Please note that the Non-Infrastructure Grant Application will draw from information contained in the Activities and Programs Plan, but also requires detailed cost estimates for the submitted programs and activities. Click [here](#) for a list of cost estimates for commonly purchased items. Applicants seeking funding for a local SRTS coordinator will also need to describe her/his intended role in the SRTS program.

All applications must be substantially complete and submitted by **March 31**.

More information is available in the [Virginia SRTS Program Guidelines](#) and on the [VDOT SRTS website](#). Call the Virginia SRTS hotline at 1-855-601-7787 with any questions.

***Event Registration for Bike to School Day is Open!***  
From [Safe Routes Matters](#), Issue 4

Join tens of thousands of children, parents, school officials and many other supporters for the fourth annual National Bike to School Day on May 6, 2015. Last year, more than 2,220 events were registered for the third annual National Bike to School Day - a thirty percent increase from the previous year. As excitement around the event continues to grow, participation is expected to increase for the 2015 celebration.

Bike to School Day is a national event that gives communities across the country the opportunity to join together in bicycling and walking to school on the same day.



The event, an exciting celebration for both those new to the experience and those who have been two-wheeling to school for years, is part of the movement for year-round safe routes to school, and encourages bicycling and walking to school as a healthy way for kids and families to make their school commute.

National Bike to School Day builds on the excitement surrounding [National Bike Month](#), led by the League of American Bicyclists each May, and builds off the 18 years of success of International Walk to School Day.

Bike to School Day event registration for 2015 began on February 11. Registration is free and open to all individuals and/or organizations planning a 2015 Bike to School Day event in the United States. Registering a Bike to School

Day event provides organizers access to a variety of downloadable materials, including stickers, certificates, badges and classroom activities. For more information, visit [www.walkbiketoschool.org](http://www.walkbiketoschool.org).

***Did You Know? The Heart Health Benefits of Active Transportation***

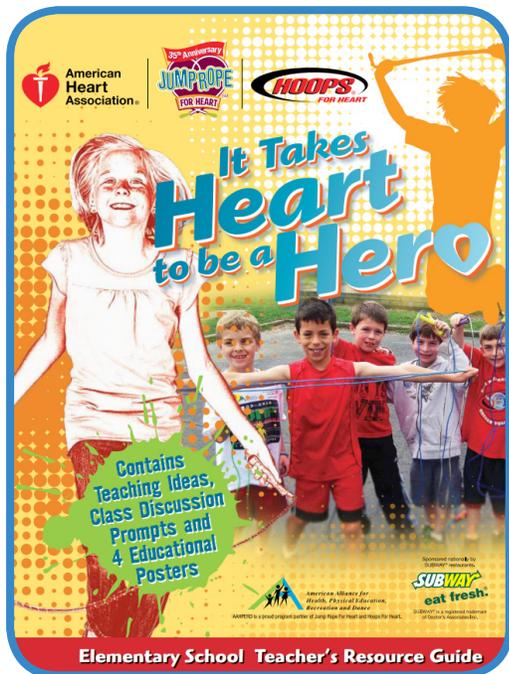
In honor of Valentine's Day and [American Heart Health Month](#), February's "Did you know?" column focuses on the cardiovascular health benefits of regular exercise including active transportation such as walking or biking to school.

A recent [review](#) of 68 studies that examined the relationship between active transportation to school and health outcomes, such as overall physical activity and cardiovascular fitness levels, found "consistent evidence that active transportation was associated with higher physical activity levels, not only during the journey to and from school, but during the whole day as well." The review went a step further, also noting differences in cardiovascular fitness depending on the mode of travel. "Some studies showed no differences and others found that walkers were slightly fitter. However, all five studies that specifically examined cycling found that cyclists were substantially fitter."

When it's a safe and efficient option, active transportation is a great way to incorporate low impact exercise into you and your family's daily routine. Everyone stands to reap the [health benefits](#), including:

- **A stronger heart** - The heart is a muscle. Like other muscles, its performance improves when it's regularly challenged by exercise. The heart responds to exercise by becoming stronger and more efficient. Strengthening the heart muscle can help ward off heart disease -- the leading cause of death in the United States, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services -- even in early childhood.
- **Clear arteries and veins** - Exercise reduces the amount of harmful cholesterol and fats in a person's blood. It increases the flexibility of the walls of blood vessels, and helps to lower blood pressure. This can reduce a

- person's risk for heart attack and stroke.
- **Reduced stress levels and stable blood pressure** - As the levels of stress in a person's body subsides, his blood pressure and his risk for heart disease decline.



Want to learn more about how your heart works and the benefits of exercise? The American Heart Association has numerous [resources](#) available, including elementary school lesson plans in its ["It Takes a Heart to Be a Hero" Teacher's Resource Guide](#).

### **1960's Safe Routes to School Video**

A savvy SRTS champion knows that the benefits of walking and biking to school are numerous and varied. This short [video](#), with footage from 1960's educational films and commentary from bicycling and walking advocates, incorporates several of the benefits in just a few minutes! The commentators speak about the decline in physical activity, the importance of educating the next generation about transportation choices and the different experiences children have as a result of walking versus being driven to school. Enjoy!



<http://www.citylab.com/commute/2015/01/this-is-how-normal-walking-to-school-used-to-be/38504/>

