



Spring 2017



Coordinator's Corner

While we have had a small tease of warm weather already, it is time to get ready for spring and summer SRTS activities! I'm excited to see schools gearing up for National Bike to School Day (BTSD), which is a great way to celebrate students who are already biking to school and encourage others to join in. Participation in BTSD by Virginia schools grows each year- in fact, the increase from 2015 to 2016 was 26%. Let's continue this great trend this year!



Excited for Bike to School Day? We have advice on bike parking as well as tips and ideas from former Quick-Start MiniGrant recipients on how to ensure your event is successful. One great way to prepare is to provide bicycle safety education leading up to Bike to School Day.

This month's Friends & Faces section focuses on cargo bikes. Matt Hassman, SRTS Coordinator for Harrisonburg City, discuss why he loves his cargo bike and Buc Syski from Kaspers Cargos talks about how cargo bikes help disabled children participate in all sorts of bike rides.

Interested in how SRTS Division coordinators are engaging with their local communities? The amazing work done by each coordinator is highlighted in the SRTS regional updates section. We also highlight the six Most Outstanding Crossing Guard Winners.

Finally, we provide information on non-infrastructure grants used to fund SRTS coordinators and some insightful questions to determine how sustainable your SRTS program may be.

If you have questions or would like more information on any of the topics included here, please call the Virginia SRTS Hotline at 1-855-601-7787 or send an email to info@virginiarts.org.

Regards,
Rob Williams
Virginia SRTS Coordinator

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CALENDAR

APRIL

- 5: National Walking Day
- 6: QuickStart Mini-grant due date
- 22: Earth Day

MAY

- ALL: National Bike Month
- 10: Bike to School Day
- 19: Bike to Work Day

Friends & Faces: Matt Hassman and Kaspers Cargos

Matt Hassman

Matt Hassman is the SRTS Coordinator for Harrisonburg City. Matt has helped to launch several initiatives throughout Harrisonburg including a walking school bus at Spotswood Elementary and a walker rewards program.



What inspired you to buy a cargo bike?

I was inspired to buy a cargo bike when my wife and I found out that we were expecting. As one of my son's primary caregivers, I wanted to be able to travel with my son and since I rely on my bike for transportation, I wanted to make sure he could ride with me. My cargo bike has enough room that I installed a car seat! The car seat helps me feel comfortable riding around with him. I have a Larry vs. Harry Bullitt which I purchased in June 2016 from Kaspers Cargos (featured in next section).

What do you primarily use it for?

The great thing about my cargo bike is that it allows me to use my bike like most people use their car. I'm able to pick up groceries or paper towels without much planning. With a normal bike, you have to worry about how you are going to carry things or spend time strapping things down. I don't have to

worry about that at all and can just pick things up when I need to.

I also take my son with me when I help with the walking school bus program at Spotswood Elementary. Once I get to school, I lock my bike up, unfold his stroller and we are ready to go!

What is your favorite thing about your cargo bike?

My favorite thing is probably how much other people love the bike. I can't go through a day without someone complimenting me on it or wanting to talk about it, so it is a great conversation starter. It's also helping to inspire conversations about active transportation which is rewarding as a bicycling advocate. The bike is odd enough to catch people's attention, but I try to make riding the bike seem easy so it is approachable.

Any advice for people interested in purchasing a cargo bike?

I'd say do it! If you have a place to park it conveniently and already ride a bike for transportation, you'll love a cargo bike. It is so convenient and fun to ride on. If I had to keep only one bike, I would keep my cargo bike!



Kaspers Cargos - Buc Syski

Buc Syski resides in Silver Spring, Maryland and runs Kaspers Cargos, a charity organization that uses the proceeds from the sale of cargo bikes to help children with disabilities experience the joys of riding a bike.

Tell us a little about Kaspers Cargos please.

Kaspers came into being because we do charity work with disabled kids and needed bikes that could carry kids around. We bring our cargo bikes to different events to make it possible for disabled kids to participate as bicycle pilots. The events range from charity rides raising money for cancer research to community bicycle events. Many of our volunteers are boy scouts who are always looking for more events and adventures.

Proceeds from each cargo bike Kaspers Cargos sells go towards supporting our charity work. We are currently enjoying our 6th year. We don't really try hard to sell these bikes, they sort of sell themselves along the way.

Where do you primarily work?

We're in Silver Spring, Maryland but have volunteers and cargo bikes up and down the east coast -- from Vermont to New York City to Florida. We try to be as close to children's hospitals as we can.

What kind of bikes do you use?

We have been working with Larry Vs. Harry, Copenhagen, since they first started. Their Bullitt Cargos (which Matt has) are great and have big cargo baskets in the front which makes taking our VIP pilots around really easy.

What makes cargo bikes so special?

A cargo bike really makes the transition from a two-car family to a single-car or zero-car family much easier. It is also a great investment in your health. Instead of riding only for speed or fun, you also are riding to commute and will get much more done along your route. It is also a great way for families to spend more time together -these bikes are time machines. Even after children outgrow them, they can be used for hauling pets, groceries. and packages.

Any advice for those interested in buying a cargo bike?

Cargo bikes are coming down in price; as their cost fits into a family's budget they may be more of a sensible option for people. There are many different brands on the market, almost all of which are a great start. Most quality cargo bikes hold their value should you decide to sell, as there are very few available for resale because in time these bicycles become a favorite of cyclists.



For more information on Kaspers Cargos, please visit www.kasperscargos.com

Bike to School Day 2017!

Each year, tens of thousands of children, parents, school officials and community leaders nationwide participate in National Bike to School Day (BTSD). Last year, 217 Virginia schools participated in BTSD -- the 3rd best turnout nationwide!

Whether you are a seasoned Bike to School Day champion or will be planning an event for the first time, be sure to check out the resources on the program website, including How to Plan a Walk or Bike to School Day Event in 7 Days and our Learn it, Do it, Live Event Ideas tip sheet.

Two sections in this newsletter provide additional guidance for bike to school day planning. The first section provides advice from previous Quickstart Mini-grant winners on how to best plan for Bike to School Day. The second section provides guidance on school bike parking and how temporary bike parking can be set up for special events such as Bike to School Day.

To register your Bike to School Day event, get event ideas, or see what other schools are planning, visit the newly redesigned [Walk and Bike to School Day website](#).

Bike to School Day Planning Advice

Are you planning a Bike to School Day event?

Here's some advice from past QuickStart Mini-grant recipients.

- Publicize the events early and in as many forms as possible to encourage as much student and parent participation as possible. - *Danielle Seiger, West Springfield Elementary School*

- Plan early, get volunteers, and remember that safety and awareness is the most important part. - *Keow Essig, Olde Creek Elementary School*
- Get the principal on your side and excited about your event and it usually flows smoothly from there. The more help you bring in from outside the school the more excited the school will be to work with you since you won't be tapping too deeply into their already limited resources. - *Kyle Lawrence, Mountain View Elementary*
- Organize a team to help with the project and delegate jobs. - *Paige Holbert, Westover Hills Elementary School*
- Fully use the school's communication technology to reach the largest target audience. - *Neal White*
- Promote the events through all ways possible and get community members and businesses involved. Make your event exciting and talk it up beforehand. If you have a successful first event, people will continue to come out to subsequent events. - *Henry Castelvechi, Crestwood Elementary School*

Bicycle Parking Resources

If you want to ensure students can bike to school, you need to make sure there are enough bike racks for them to park their bikes! Here are some recommendations.

Bike Parking Planning

Planning for a new bike racks is easy and can have a large impact on active school travel. The first step in planning for additional bike parking is to review the existing conditions. Start by observing how bike racks are used during arrival and dismissal or use the [School Bicycle Parking Assessment guide](#). If bike racks are completely full and additional bikes are locked to trees, handrails, or other fixtures, then there is

clearly a need for additional bike parking. You can also review previous Student Travel Tallies to see how many students typically bike to school.

With the information you have on existing conditions and potential bike parking needs, reach out to school, city, and county staff. School staff will need to approve new bike racks and you may be able to raise funds through the Parent Teacher Association. Also contact your local city or county planning department to see if they have funding available to install a bike rack (ask for the bicycle program manager or a transportation planner to start). Many cities and counties will install bike racks with existing funding and have design expertise which will help with planning and installing bike racks.

Also consider what type to install. Bike racks should support bikes in at least two spaces, allow students to lock the front wheel and main frame of their bike to the rack, provide enough space



Figure 1. Grid Rack

between racks for easy movement, and be secured to the ground. Grid racks (Figure 1), common on school campuses, neither permit the frame and tire to be locked to the rack nor properly support the bike frame which can lead to bent tires.



Figure 2. Inverted U Rack

"Inverted U" racks (Figure 2) are the most desirable racks as they provide a sturdy, secure, and convenient parking space.

Place bike racks as close to a school entrance as possible for convenience and visibility, helping to discourage bike theft. Bike racks should also be fastened to concrete, which improves security and prevents bikes and shoes from getting dirty. Covering bike racks with a roof or other structure keeps them dry when it rains or snows.

Temporary Bike Parking for Special Events

While your school may have sufficient bike parking on most days, special events such as International Bike to School Day or Walk and Roll Days can significantly increase bike parking demand. Since this extra capacity is only needed on certain days, have a plan in place for special events, such as:

- **Bike Valet / Corral:** Set up temporary fenced-in area or marked area where bikes can be stored. Orange safety fencing works great! Use volunteers to staff the valet. When students arrive, volunteers can help bring the bikes into the corral area. A long cable lock can be used to secured all the bikes to each other during the day.
- **Temporary Bike Racks:** Consider building or purchasing low-cost temporary bike racks. Temporary bike racks can be purchased for as little as \$35 and can be assembled in a matter of minutes, allowing you to set up bike racks as needed and break them down when your event is over. You can also build temporary bike racks using saw horses, 2 x 4's, or other materials.
- **Bike Shop Rentals:** It is common for bike shops to have bike racks that are used for races or special events. Consider contacting your local bike shop to see if they are willing to rent or loan you bike racks for your upcoming event. They may even be willing to volunteer to assist with your event!

Regional SRTS Updates

In early February, SRTS Coordinators throughout Virginia met for a two-day training session. During this training, each division coordinator had an opportunity to share their proudest moments or greatest achievements from the past year. Below is a list of highlights for each of the 5 E's submitted by coordinators throughout Virginia.

Encouragement

- **Portsmouth:** Eight out of twelve Portsmouth schools participated in International Walk to School Day with four schools participating for the first time.
- **Newport News:** Students at Charles Elementary met or were dropped off by bus at Menchville High School so that the entire school could make the short walk together.
- **Galax:** Every school in Galax participated in International Walk to School Day with over 750+ students walking.
- **Harrisonburg City:** A new walker rewards program has over 100+ participants at two schools and offers weather-related incentives: ponchos, umbrellas, and socks.
- **Chesterfield County:** The daily walker and biker reward program's 280 participants across nine schools receives special tokens to reward those who walk to school.

Education

- **Loudoun County:** Janice Jennings and Valerie Mulhern developed a quarterly newsletter to keep those interested in SRTS news up to date.
- **Fairfax County:** Bike safety lesson plans and resources that are available for all PE teachers in Fairfax County, developed by Sally Smallwood, who also helps lead bike safety lessons.

Evaluation

- **Arlington County:** Arlington Public Schools conducted a school-wide survey of parent, staff, and students which showed that driving had slightly decreased while both walking and biking had increased since 2013!

Engineering

- **Prince William County:** Becky Short conducted walkabouts at Potomac MS and Mary Williams ES which led to the installation of two new crosswalks.
- **Chesapeake:** High visibility crosswalks and additional signage were added at Camelot ES.

Enforcement

- **Prince William County:** Custom SRTS insulated mugs were given to every crossing guard in Prince William County for Crossing Guard Appreciation Day.

Non-Infrastructure Grants

The Virginia SRTS program funds municipal- or school division-based local SRTS coordinators through its Non-Infrastructure Grant program. This reimbursement program funds both full- and part-time coordinators with pre-set maximums. The online application is due by noon on April 17, but can be started as early as March 17 after submitting the required Activities and Programs Plan. Previously submitted APPs must be updated to reflect your most recent activities and planning for the grant period. Cities or school divisions applying for a fourth round of funding will need to include a 20% local match in their grant budget.

Information and resources for the grant program are available on the Virginia SRTS program website's School Travel Plans and Grants page, under Non-Infrastructure Grants Resources, including Guidelines, a plan template and a FAQ sheet.

How to tell if your SRTS program can 'go the distance'

SRTS programs are most enduring if they are well integrated into the community in which a school is based. How do you know if it is?

Consider doing a quick assessment of these items by asking where you are, where you'd like to be, and identifying several steps to get there. Look in 3 directions – your school, your school division, the larger community – and ask yourself some questions, such as the ones below.

Individual School Commitment

- Are there safe and complete routes to school?
- Do more parents and students want to walk or bicycle?
- Is there time to organize SRTS activities?
- Is SRTS on our calendar?
- Does our principal and staff support walking and bicycling to school?

Larger Community Commitment

- Are we part of community transportation planning?
- Are local businesses and other organizations reaching out to us to offer assistance, as well as being receptive to helping when we ask?
- Do we partner with others such as our local college or university?

School Division Commitment

- Do policies support walking and bicycling to school?
- Is SRTS on the calendar?
- Does leadership know about and support it?
- Do you know how SRTS activities' help student behavior and academic performance?
- Is there someone whose job it is to coordinate and promote SRTS?

What Else?

- Of course, the most enduring commitment is funding, especially for sidewalks, street crossings, and trails. A permanent SRTS coordinator is also helpful. Is this possible for your school or school division?

Most Outstanding Crossing Guard Winners

Thank you to everyone who took the time to nominate their crossing guard-71 individual crossing guards in all. Please join us in congratulating the winners of Virginia's Most Outstanding Crossing Guard Award!

Roger Tally, Hampton Middle School (Woodbridge)

Mr. Roger Tally has over 15 years of experience as a crossing guard and students describe him as, "probably the best crossing guard any school in the county can have" and "the BEST crossing guard in the WORLD."



Ana Hernandez, Ashlawn Elementary (Arlington)



Ms. Hernandez is key to managing the constant flow of buses, cars, construction vehicles, bikers, and pedestrians travelling near Ashlawn Elementary School. With her constant smile, a parent who nominated her mentioned that, "everyone is secretly glad when

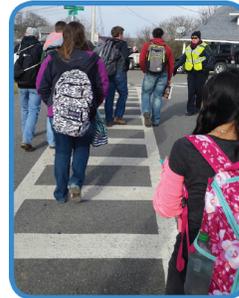
one has to wait by her side for traffic to pass because Ana asks after you in a way that brings instant sun into your life, no matter the actual weather."

Sadie White, Fairfield Court Elementary School (Richmond)

Ms. Sadie White brings over five years of experience to Fairfield Court Elementary School and has a track record of protecting students. Ms. White put herself in harm's way to protect students when a car made an illegal turn into her crosswalk earlier this year. Although she broke her arm in the incident, she was back at work within days!



Vickie Taylor, Galax Middle School (Galax)



Officer Vickie Taylor is a 15-year veteran of the Galax City Police Department who also helps run the Safe Routes to School Bike Rodeo Obstacle Course, teaches girl's self-defense, and is the coach of the JV girls' softball team. Officer Taylor, "always has the student's best interests

at heart" according to Galax High School principal Justin Iroler.

Anne Byrd, Spotswood Elementary School (Harrisonburg City)

The Spotswood Elementary School community is much safer because of the friendly and attentive Ms. Anne Byrd. An attempted abduction was prevented by Ms. Byrd's alertness and quick thinking, as she rescued a student who was approached by a stranger.



Regina Jordan, Larchmont Elementary School (Norfolk)



Ms. Regina Jordan's hands are quite full as she helps students from Larchmont Elementary School, Old Dominion University, and several nearby Catholic schools get to and from school safely. With over 10 years of experience at Larchmont Elementary, Ms. Jordan is described as a fixture of the school community.

Learn more about this year's Most Outstanding Crossing Guards [here](#).