



Chinatown Community  
Development Center



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**CONTACT:**

Nicole Ferrara, Executive Director, Walk San Francisco, 415.404.9024, [nicole@walksf.org](mailto:nicole@walksf.org)

Angelina Yu, Community Organizer, Chinatown CDC, 415.735.1862, [ayu@chinatowncdc.org](mailto:ayu@chinatowncdc.org)

Jane Packer, Senior Director of Marketing and Communications, YMCA, 415.281.6747

[jpacker@ymcasf.org](mailto:jpacker@ymcasf.org)

## New Pedestrian Safety Curriculum Trains Youth as 'City Street Investigators' in Chinatown

Curriculum Launches on the Heels of School District's Adoption of a Vision Zero Policy

**San Francisco** youth enrolled in after school programs in Chinatown are being trained on pedestrian safety over a two-week period, helping to improve safety skills and children's understanding of the transportation system. The curriculum is the result of a partnership between the Chinatown YMCA, the Chinatown Community Development Center, Walk San Francisco, and the San Francisco Safe Routes to School Partnership. All youth enrolled in after school programs served by the Chinatown YMCA are receiving pedestrian trainings.

For grades K-2, instructors are using the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Child Pedestrian Safety Curriculum, which focuses on motor skill development, a key issue for young children who often have not developed the cognitive capacity to judge basics like the speed of traffic, or the direction of oncoming traffic.

Students in grades 3-5 are also receiving innovative lessons on the impact of street design on pedestrian safety. Building on a curriculum developed by New York City, students act as "City Street Investigators," or detectives that are analyzing problems on the street, and determining street redesign solutions that will help overcome the challenges. Students also present their proposed changes to a mock Transportation Safety Board.

"Most students in Chinatown are already walking to school, so the approach here isn't just to encourage more children to walk, it's to make sure that they're getting to and from school safely," explains Nicole Ferrara, Executive Director of Walk SF, and a partner in the SF Safe Routes to School Partnership. "This approach is unique because we're not stopping at education, we're thinking of additional ways to empower kids and families with the knowledge

they need to assess their transportation system and determine needed improvements to truly achieve Vision Zero and end traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2024.”

“Pedestrian safety is a very important topic that our youth should be learning and practicing in these formative years,” says Misa Nguyen, associate director of youth programs at the Chinatown Y. “After this training, our youth will understand that signals, signs and lights are to be observed with the utmost care, and that they also have to use their senses to safely navigate the streets. Our afterschool programs are so grateful for the opportunity to engage in a curriculum that could potentially save lives!”

Jean Parker Elementary School, located adjacent to the high traffic Broadway Street, is one of the sites offering this innovative curriculum. Broadway Street will soon be home to pedestrian safety improvements through a streetscape redesign project led by SF Public Works.

“Discussing street redesign in conjunction with upcoming pedestrian safety improvements is an excellent way to build awareness for solutions needed to achieve Vision Zero,” says Angelina Yu, Senior Community Organizer at CCDC. “The curriculum conveys important safe walking tips for children who are transit-dependent, but more importantly it empowers them with the vocabulary, toolkit and an urban planning lens for envisioning what safer streets can look like in their neighborhood.”

With Tuesday’s adoption of a Vision Zero resolution by the San Francisco School Board, Chinatown’s efforts demonstrate an innovative approach to child pedestrian safety education. Improving street safety not only requires instilling motor skills at a critical age, but also helping youth understand the City’s role in preventing injuries, and how they can get involved in that process.

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**Walk San Francisco ([WalkSF.org](https://www.walksf.org))** and its members are making San Francisco a more welcoming place for everyone to walk. Walk SF speaks up for the safety and priority of pedestrians, and works to reclaim streets as shared public space.

**Chinatown Community Development Center ([ChinatownCDC.org](https://www.chinatowncdc.org))** believes in a comprehensive vision of community that includes a quality environment, healthy neighborhood economies, and active volunteer associations. Chinatown CDC is committed to empowering low-income residents, building coalitions, embracing diversity and advocating for social and economic justice.

**Vision Zero – Zero traffic fatalities in 10 years.** No loss of life on city roadways is acceptable, when serious and fatal traffic collisions can be prevented. By engineering inherently safer streets, enforcing traffic laws more effectively, and targeting traffic-safety education, cities that adopt Vision Zero policies can eliminate ALL serious and fatal traffic-related injuries, including motorist, bicyclist, and pedestrian collisions.