



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, October 10, 2018

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Thousands of Schoolchildren Celebrate “Walk and Roll to School Day” all across San Francisco

Mayor Leads Students at Peabody Elementary in the Richmond District

Kids Dress Up in Capes like “Vision Zero Hero,”
the Icon Aiming for Zero Deaths on SF Streets

Today across San Francisco, 13,000 schoolchildren walked and rolled wheelchairs, scooters, and bikes to 90 schools for Walk and Roll to School Day, marking a decade of the city’s program to help kids get to school in a safe, healthy, active way. City leaders walked in with students all over the city.

At Peabody Elementary, Mayor London Breed and District 1 Supervisor Sandra Lee Fewer joined 280 students and their families on today’s walk to school.

All of our students, regardless of which neighborhood they live in or which school they attend, should be able to safely walk or bike to school,” said Mayor London Breed. “We are adding crossing guards across the City and I am pushing the SFMTA to expedite Vision Zero projects because we do not have time to waste. We need safer, more livable streets now.”

Here in the Richmond, lots of families walk to school,” said Supervisor Fewer. “I walked with my children to school for years. I’m impressed by the program at Peabody, where families meet up regularly to walk all together as a big group.”

Families met at the Richmond Library, where students received stickers and prepared to hold the banner with the Mayor for the last few blocks. As a special treat, all the students also got capes to wear, just like the “Vision Zero Hero,” the mascot of the city’s goal to end all traffic deaths by 2024.

“We’re so glad to be here for Walk and Roll to School Day, encouraging families to start a healthy habit and get quality time together every day,” said Jodie Medeiros, executive director of Walk San Francisco. “And we applaud Mayor Breed’s action to speed up fixes to the streets. Walking has to be safe in order to be fun.”

“It’s good to be back at Peabody: in 2011 here, with Mayor Lee, Walk SF [celebrated the launch](#) of San Francisco’s 15-mile-per-hour school zones, creating the very first of 181 safety zones around schools citywide,” added Medeiros. Walk SF helped make San Francisco the first city in the state to implement the school safety zones on this scale. “We look forward to more big strides from San Francisco to make the streets better for people on foot.”

Walk and Roll to School Day is run by Walk San Francisco as part of the San Francisco Safe Routes to School partnership. This program, funded by the city and the federal government, brings San Francisco families together to walk, learn safe biking skills, find carpools, and take public transit. It also works with

families to improve walking and biking conditions around schools, with wider sidewalks, safer speeds, better crosswalks, and more.

The Safe Routes partnership just brought “Ed’s Neighborhood,” named after Mayor Ed Lee, to Peabody as well. Supervisor Norman Yee led the creation of this traveling demo, which sets up a miniature street at schools to teach kids about traffic safety. The new program is aimed for kids in kindergarten through 2nd grade, and will travel to schools throughout the district this year.

The Safe Routes partnership also offers a program for older kids in 3rd to 5th grade called [Street Safety Explorers](#). In it, students learn about the importance of street design and pedestrian safety; they get to analyze streets around their school and learn how to advocate for change.

“We encourage students to walk or bike to school when possible. It is a way to stay fit and help our environment too,” said SFUSD Superintendent Vincent Matthews, who helped lead the walk to Peabody Elementary.

Several more city and school leaders were part of the event at Peabody Elementary School including School Superintendent Vincent Matthews, SF Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) Director Ed Reiskin, SFMTA Board Chair Cheryl Brinkman, SF Recreation and Park Department General Manager Phil Ginsburg, SF County Transportation Agency Director Tilly Chang, and SF Police Department Deputy Chief Mikail Ali.

“Studies have found that walking to school helps children academically, not just physically. It can also be a great way for parents and kids to talk about the upcoming day,” said Principal Vroegh. “Helping students walk to school gives them another tool for success.”

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Walk San Francisco ([WalkSF.org](#)) and its members are making San Francisco a more livable, walkable city, by reclaiming streets as safe, shared public space for everyone to enjoy.

International Walk and Roll to School Day calls for making streets safer for walking, encourages kids in a habit of daily physical activity, reduces traffic, and helps the environment.

The San Francisco Safe Routes to School Partnership ([SFSafeRoutes.org](#)) implements the federally funded Safe Routes to School program to get students walking and biking. Led by the San Francisco Department of Public Health, it includes the San Francisco Unified School District, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, San Francisco Department of the Environment, the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, Presidio YMCA Bike Program, Tenderloin Safe Passage, and Walk San Francisco.

Vision Zero is the goal to end all traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2024 in San Francisco. For too long, traffic deaths and severe injuries have been considered inevitable, but these tragedies can be prevented. Vision Zero builds a safe transportation system that assumes humans will make mistakes, and designs streets and policies so that those mistakes are not lethal.