

Rochester “Drive 2B Better”

Common Ground Health

Common Ground Health, via the Healthi Kids Coalition (Healthi Kids), is working to eliminate obstacles to physical activity and increase safety, convenience, and mobility for all residents.

This movement, known as Complete Streets, helps to ensure roads have proper sidewalks, bike lanes, and crosswalks. Complete Streets leads to better health outcomes by increasing physical activity and reducing air pollution; spurs economic growth by decreasing transportation costs and connecting people to places in their neighborhoods; and strengthens communities by improving the mobility of youth, the elderly, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups.

Changing the Travel Norm

The sprawling, automobile-focused way in which U.S. cities like Rochester were developed resulted in homes being separated from jobs, retail, and school. Wide roads and highways move people in cars from one place to the next. However, car-focused roads are costly, visually unappealing, and traffic-inducing. And the more time people spend in cars, the less they are engaging in physical activity.

Being active on a regular basis reduces the risk for and ability to manage chronic diseases such as obesity and heart disease. In addition, travel-related costs are expensive and reduce the amount of money individuals have for necessities (e.g., housing, food) and to spend in their community. Active transportation, such as walking and biking, increases physical activity and provides a cheaper way to get around.

Rochester’s adoption of Complete Streets with bike lanes, sharrows, and sidewalks supports residents and visitors who choose active transportation modes. But all users of the road—drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists—must learn to share it safely.

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Bike to School Day at Rochester City School District’s School #23

Partnering to Promote Safety

Promoting safe use of the roads for all users was not simple. As the leader in this effort, Healthi Kids created a Traffic Education Committee (Committee) of representatives from the City of Rochester, Monroe County’s Departments of Health and Public Safety, Rochester Transportation Service, law enforcement, the metropolitan planning organization, AARP, United Way, University of Rochester, Rochester City School District, residents, and cycling, transportation, and disability rights advocacy groups to develop the “Drive 2B Better” traffic safety campaign. Together, the Committee worked alongside Causewave Community Partners, a non-profit that supports community initiatives, to develop the ads with funding from Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC), Causewave Community Partners, MVP Healthcare, and other partner organizations.

The “Drive 2B Better” campaign aims to increase knowledge of traffic safety and change attitudes and perceptions about sharing the road. It was launched in September 2018 with shareable social media content, billboards, and other public displays.

The first ads used humor to ask “What Will It Take To Be Seen?” by depicting pedestrians and cyclists going to the extreme—such as wearing a bubble suit, at right—to make sure drivers see them. The highly shareable and engaging ads are meant to promote the message that vehicle drivers need to be more aware of pedestrian and cycling traffic.

The Committee will continue to meet and develop the Drive 2B Better campaign. It will measure success through community surveys on knowledge of traffic safety and perceptions about sharing the road. The Committee hopes to see an increase in the number of people walking and biking and a decrease in motor vehicle crashes with cyclists and pedestrians.



A pedestrian in a bubble suit makes his way through a crosswalk at State and Main Streets



to learn more...

visit: www.healthikids.org.com

email: Mike Bulger at mike.bulger@commongroundhealth.org



Creating Healthy Schools and Communities

The places where we live, learn, work, and play all contribute to our ability to become and stay healthy. Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC), a five-year (2015-2020) New York State Department of Health-funded initiative, is helping build stronger, healthier communities.