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THREE ORANGE COUNTY STUDENTS HONORED IN STATEWIDE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY POSTER CONTEST

ORLANDO, Fla. — (April 9, 2015) — Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) will honor the three winners of the 2015 WalkSafe® Statewide Poster Contest from Orange County at its April 14 board meeting.

More than 20 students from nine OCPS elementary schools submitted entries in the poster contest. The winners are:

- Alyssa Witting from Lake George Elementary in the Kindergarten to First grade category
- Eva Robinson from Lake Sybelia Elementary in the Second to Third grade category
- Maddison Anneus from Lake Silver Elementary in the Fourth to Fifth grade category

WalkSafe® is a three-day curriculum created by the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine that aims to decrease the number of children injured as pedestrians, increase physical activity, and encourage the use of walkable environments. The curriculum combines classroom instruction, interactive practice through physical education, and conceptual learning through art class culminating in submissions to the annual poster contest.

Best Foot Forward and OCPS teamed up with WalkSafe to educate students about pedestrian safety. This year 27 elementary schools and 17,315 students took part in the curriculum – an increase of 34 percent from last year.

The Orange County WalkSafe poster contest winners will be honored at the Orange County School Board meeting, which will take place at 5:30 p.m. on April 14, at 445 W. Amelia St., Orlando, Fla. The winners will receive a \$60 Famous Footwear gift card, WalkSafe T-shirts and WalkSafe gear, such as a reflective drawstring bag, glow-in-the-dark bracelets and reflective tags. The winners also will have their original posters framed for display at their schools.

“We would like to commend Orange County Public Schools for taking an active stance on pedestrian safety among children. Orange County surpassed our implementation goals by 120 percent this year,” said Gillian Hotz, PhD at University of Miami Miller School of Medicine WalkSafe Program Director. “We would like to recognize Orange County Public Schools for being the Statewide WalkSafe Champion of the year.”





To view the winning posters, visit WalkSafe's Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/iWalkSafe>.

Pedestrian safety continues to be a hot button topic as the top four most dangerous metro regions in the US are in Florida, (Orlando, Tampa/St. Petersburg/Clearwater, Jacksonville, and Miami/Ft. Lauderdale/Pompano Beach), according to the 2014 "Dangerous by Design" study.

Orange County Public Schools is a founding coalition partner and offers the Sunshine State Standard WalkSafe curriculum as a resource to all elementary school teachers.

About WalkSafe®

WalkSafe is a three-day elementary school curriculum that satisfies more than 10 Next Generation Sunshine State standards. Created in 2001 by Dr. Gillian Hotz, the program is based out of the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine to teach students in kindergarten through grade 5 to safely walk to and from school. Since its inception, Miami-Dade County's pedestrian accident figures for elementary school aged children decreased by 72 percent. To learn more, visit www.walksafe.us.

About Best Foot Forward

The *Best Foot Forward* pedestrian safety initiative was launched in June 2012 to reduce pedestrian deaths and injuries in Metro Orlando by getting drivers to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and getting pedestrians to be more careful crossing the street. More than a campaign, this "Triple-E" behavioral change process seeks to create lasting social good through the consistent and persistent application of low-cost engineering, community education, and high-visibility enforcement.

Initiated by Bike/Walk Central Florida under the leadership of former Orange County Mayor Linda Chapin, spearheaded by Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer and Mayor Teresa Jacobs, the Best Foot Forward coalition includes Orange County Government, Orange County Public Schools, Orlando Health, Lynx, Winter Park Health Foundation, MetroPlan Orlando, the City of Orlando, Winter Park, Maitland, Winter Garden, Apopka, and towns of Eatonville and Windermere as well as police chiefs throughout Orange County led by Orlando Police Chief John Mina and Orange County Sheriff Jerry Demings.

The long term goal is to cut pedestrian injuries in half in ten years. The short term goals are to increase driver yield rates by 60 percent on roads posted 35 mph and higher, and a 10 percent increase on driver yield rates year over year on roads posted 40 mph and higher. To learn more, go to www.iyield4peds.org.

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