



MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Stopping Distracted Driving: Crosswalk Crackdown Coming to Osceola County Operation Best Foot Forward's High-Visibility Crosswalk Enforcement Scheduled for April 17, 18

KISSIMMEE, Fla (April 15, 2019)– Distracted driving has become a deadly epidemic on our roads. With April being National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, the Osceola County Sheriff's Office, the Kissimmee Police Department and the St. Cloud Police Department will be out this week, looking for distracted drivers who don't yield to pedestrians in marked crosswalks, as Florida law requires. Best Foot Forward encourages all drivers to be on the lookout for pedestrians in crosswalks. Officers and deputies will fan out across the county on April 17 and 18, to remind drivers Florida law requires them to stop for a pedestrian at crosswalks. (List of crosswalk locations below)

Dubbed **Operation Best Foot Forward**, crosswalk enforcement is part of a more comprehensive effort to educate drivers about Florida's right-of-way laws and curb the pattern of aggressive behavior towards pedestrians. During the operation, plainclothes deputies and officers cross the street at marked crosswalks, giving drivers ample time to yield and stop. Drivers who fail to stop, may be issued a warning or a \$166 traffic citation and three points on their license. Studies show that crosswalk enforcement, along with education and engineering, results in changes in driver yielding behavior. If left unchecked the driver-versus-pedestrian culture flourishes.

In January 2019, Smart Growth America released its *Dangerous by Design Report* that ranked Greater Metro Orlando area as the number one "most dangerous" U.S. metropolitan area for pedestrians, where on average three pedestrians are injured daily and one killed weekly. Dangerous by Design uses fatality crash data from the last 10 years against the number of people that walk. The region has made progress, with pedestrian injuries and fatalities decreasing 24 percent between 2017 and 2018, according to Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

Best Foot Forward was launched in Osceola County in October 2017, in order to curb the tide of shocking, aggressive behavior toward pedestrians. This is especially important with the growth of SunRail into Osceola County.

Best Foot Forward is supported in Osceola County by: Osceola County, City of Kissimmee, City of St. Cloud, Osceola County Sheriff's Office, Kissimmee Police Department, Osceola County Public Schools, Osceola County Health Department, MetroPlan Orlando and Lynx.

NOTE TO EDITORS AND PRODUCERS: Media is invited to *Operation Best Foot Forward* and will have the opportunity to speak to drivers, police officers and pedestrians. Contact Katie Clarke at 706-380-5450 (mobile). Times and locations below:

Osceola County April 17, 18 Crosswalk Enforcement Schedule

Crosswalk	Date/Time	Percent of drivers yielding in initial data collection	Schools & Neighborhoods Nearby
Osceola County Sheriff's Office			
April 17			
Buenaventura Blvd. & Briarwood Dr.	8:30 AM – 9:15 AM	12% <i>Apr 2019</i>	Boggy Creek ES, Ventura ES, Parkway MS
Buenaventura Blvd. & Florida Pkwy	9:30 AM – 10:15 AM	41% <i>Apr 2019</i>	Boggy Creek ES, Ventura ES, Parkway MS
Michigan Ave. & Garden St.	11:00 AM – 11:45 AM	11% <i>Apr 2019</i>	Osceola County School for the Arts, Kissimmee Charter ES, Osceola Science STEM Charter School
Kissimmee Police Department			
April 18			
N. Thacker Ave. & Kissimmee Trail	8:30 AM – 10:30 AM	17% <i>Mar 2018</i>	Highlands ES, Kissimmee ES, Kissimmee MS, Central Ave ES
311 W. Oak St.	10:45 AM – 12:00 PM	11% <i>Feb 2019</i>	Beaumont MS, Thacker Ave ES, Central Ave ES

Making Progress: Best Foot Forward Program Outcomes in Orange and Osceola Counties from 2012-2019

- More than 8 thousand citations and warnings issued since 2012
- 77 crosswalks enforced by law enforcement
- 40 percent increase – average yielding behavior change at those crosswalks being tracked by Best Foot Forward

About [Best Foot Forward](#) for Pedestrian Safety Program

The Best Foot Forward for pedestrian safety program is administered by the local non-profit, Bike/Walk Central Florida, and first launched in Orange County in 2012. It expanded to Osceola County in 2017 and will be launching in Seminole County in 2019.

Best Foot Forward was created to reverse the conflict between pedestrians and drivers by focusing on one specific behavior change - getting more drivers to yield and stop for pedestrians at marked crosswalks as [Florida law](#) requires. More than a campaign, Best Foot Forward is a behavior change-based program designed to improve road safety through consistent and persistent education, high-visibility crosswalk enforcement and low-cost engineering at marked crosswalks in close proximity to elementary schools and LYNX bus stops, in urban areas and a cross section of low and high-speed roads.

Best Foot Forward Coalition

Initiated and administered by Bike/Walk Central Florida, the Best Foot Forward coalition includes: MetroPlan Orlando, City of Orlando and Orlando Police Department, City of Kissimmee and Kissimmee

Police Department, City of St. Cloud and St. Cloud Police Department, Orange County Government, Orange County Sheriff's Office, Orange County Public Schools, Osceola County Government, Osceola County Sheriff's Office, Osceola County Public Schools, Lynx, Orlando Health, the Florida Department of Health, the Florida Department of Transportation, the University of Miami's WalkSafe program and Winter Park Health Foundation. To learn more, visit www.iyield4peds.org.

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