



For Immediate Release

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Operation Best Foot Forward Begins April 30 to Promote Pedestrian Safety Around Central Florida Parks & Trails

ORLANDO, FLA. – April 30, 2024 – Recognizing that less than 50% of Central Florida drivers are yielding to pedestrians near parks and trails, the Best Foot Forward for Pedestrian Safety program will be kicking off its quarterly pedestrian safety enforcement, dubbed *Operation Best Foot Forward*, to bring awareness and education to drivers to keep pedestrians safe near parks and trail crossings in Central Florida.

Law enforcement agencies will be conducting a two-week high-visibility crosswalk enforcement from Tuesday, April 30 to Friday, May 10 across six Central Florida counties: Osceola, Orange, Seminole, Volusia, Brevard and Marion as part of FDOT’s Target Zero initiative to reduce traffic-related serious injuries and deaths to zero.

During Operation Best Foot Forward, plainclothes officers and deputies will cross streets at marked crosswalks, giving drivers enough time to slow down and stop safely. Drivers who do not stop as Florida law requires will be pulled over and face a minimum \$164 citation and three (3) points on their driver’s license. Most crosswalks chosen for enforcement are near parks and trail crossings.

According to data collected by the Best Foot Forward for Pedestrian Safety program this year, only 49% of drivers yield to pedestrians within a half-mile of parks and only 46% of drivers yield to pedestrians at trail crossings. In a recent [study by Injury Prevention](#), the risk of child pedestrian fatalities is more than twice as high near parks compared to schools. This may be related to the built-in environment within school zones that slows down drivers during times when children are most likely to be walking. This quarter’s operation aims to instill that same sense of cautiousness around parks and trail crossings, especially as the school year comes to an end and more children will likely spend time outdoors at parks and trails.

Operation Best Foot Forward is part of the Best Foot Forward coalition’s larger effort to improve road safety. Studies show that driver behavior changes when you combine these enforcement strategies, education, and engineering over a sustained period. Crosswalk locations include:

<u>Crosswalk Locations</u>	<u>Enforcement Agency</u>	<u>Nearby Park or Trail</u>
Oakland Ave. & Sansparilla Rd.	Oakland Police Department	West Orange Trail & Oakland Nature Preserve
N. Hoagland Blvd. at Kissimmee Trail N. Thacker Ave. at Kissimmee Trail	Kissimmee Police Department	Kissimmee Trail
S. Beach St. & Cedar St.	Daytona Beach Police Department	Bethune Point Park
S. Atlantic Ave. & Ocean Ave	New Smyrna Police Department	Marianne Clancy Park
N. Forsyth Rd. at Cady Way Trail	Orange County Sheriff’s Office	Cady Way Trail

S. Atlantic Ave. & Winterhaven Park	Ponce Inlet Police Department	Winterhaven Park
W. Central Blvd. & Bayside Dr.	Brevard County Sheriff's Office (Cape Canaveral)	Manatee Sanctuary Park & Banana River Park
Greenwood Pkwy & Buttonwood Dr.	Seminole County Sheriff's Office	Cross Seminole Trail
Jason Dwelley Pkwy & Brush Dr.	Apopka Police Department	Jason Dwelley Park
Ronald Reagan Blvd & SR 434	Longwood Police Department	Reiter Park

For a complete schedule of the intersection locations including time and day as well as an interactive map, visit: <https://www.iyield4peds.org/operationbff/>

About the Best Foot Forward for Pedestrian Safety Program

The Best Foot Forward for Pedestrian Safety (BFF) program is administered by the local non-profit Bike/Walk Central Florida (BWCF). BFF was created to reverse the conflict between pedestrians and drivers by focusing on one specific behavior change – getting more drivers to yield 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 countermeasures at marked crosswalks. Best Foot Forward operates in six Central Florida counties and is the largest pedestrian-focused grassroots coalition in the nation, working with more than 40 local and regional partners. Since launching in 2012, the percentage of drivers yielding to people in marked crosswalks has increased from 17% to more than 50% on roads with a speed limit of 35 mph and lower and 2% to 45% on roads 40 mph and higher. To learn more, visit iyield4peds.org.

About Bike/Walk Central Florida:

Bike Walk Central Florida (BWCF) is a regional advocacy organization for bicyclists and pedestrians. Since 2010, the organization has worked on behalf of local pedestrians and bicyclists to advocate for safe and convenient places for people to bike and walk, regardless of where they live or where they need to go. Focusing on their four pillars of policy, perception, practice, and sustainability, BWCF works tirelessly to advocate for policies, programs and infrastructure that is fair and accessible to all.

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