



The Skillman Foundation Presents

YAKTIVITIES FOR HELPING KIDS

Safe Routes to School

A Way to Get Kids Bicycling and Walking for Exercise

Safe Routes to School is both a state program and an international movement.

Its goal is to make it safe, convenient and fun for students to bicycle and walk to school.

When routes are safe, walking and biking to and from school is a great way for students to get the regular exercise and physical activity they need to be healthy.

In Michigan, the state Department of Transportation and the Michigan Fitness Foundation coordinate the program with help from the Michigan departments of Community Health and Education, universities and several non-profit organizations, including The Skillman Foundation.

How does it work?

Each school registers to join the Safe Routes to School state program. Each school then forms a local team consisting of parents, teachers, students, school administrators, law enforcement officers and neighborhood and community associations.

These teams work together to come up with a plan that will allow and encourage students to walk or bicycle to school on safe routes.

Each school manages its own program and can apply to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) for federal funds to assist in this endeavor.



Paul Engstrom/Skillman Foundation

Just this fall it was announced that 41 elementary and middle schools in 10 Michigan counties will receive more than \$8.7 million in federal "Safe Routes to School" funds to set up and run their programs.

The schools will set up education programs and make safety improvements to give students more opportunities to travel safely between home and school on foot or on bikes.

School programs will also provide adults to walk or travel with students for safety where necessary.

To be eligible for funding, schools completed a "Handbook Planning Process" and developed an action plan designed to meet

the specific needs of each school.

MDOT, with help from the Michigan Fitness Foundation, has made the handbook planning process available to every elementary and middle school in the state.

More information about Michigan's Safe Routes to School Program, the Handbook Planning Process, the Action Plan and funding, is available on the Internet at the Web site www.saferoutesmichigan.org.

Kids Exercise List

What kinds of things do kids in your family do to get exercise? On a sheet of paper, list five of them. Then list a new kind of exercise you could try as a family.



Paul Engstrom/Skillman Foundation

THINK ABOUT EXERCISE

In the United States today, students from elementary school through high school don't get enough exercise. As a result, more and more American kids are overweight, and many are extremely overweight, or obese. The Safe Routes to School program seeks to provide a safe way for kids to get more exercise by walking or riding bikes to school. With family or friends, talk about the benefits of walking or riding a bike to school. Then talk about problems there might be for kids to walk or bike to school in your neighborhood. Brainstorm ways to overcome the problems, so that kids could get the benefit of more exercise going to school and coming home.