

# Walk and Bike to School Day

New Bedford students will join students from around the state in celebration of "Walk and Bike to School Day" on Wednesday, May 2, 2012, as part of the Massachusetts Safe Routes to School program, in partnership with New Bedford Mass in Motion/CORD and the City of New Bedford. Parents, teachers, school administrators and community leaders, at participating schools within the New Bedford school district will walk to/from school on Wednesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>.



At the Betsey B. Winslow Elementary School, Mayor Jon Mitchell and his daughters will join Principal Paula Bailey, Dr. Pauline, Hamel, project coordinator of New Bedford Mass in Motion/CORD, Mr. Jim Rattray, V.P. of Marketing for Southcoast Health Systems and school administrators for an organized group walk with other students and families. **The walk will begin at St. Luke's Hospital at 7:45 a.m. on Wednesday, May 2, 2012.**

Walk to School events work to create safer routes for walking and bicycling and emphasize the importance of issues such as increasing physical activity among children, pedestrian safety, decreasing traffic congestion, concern for the environment and building connections between families, schools, public safety and the broader community.

There are over 300 elementary and middle schools in 111 communities across the state working with Safe Routes to School, organizing activities and events to encourage students to walk and bicycle to school. School principals will determine the time and location for their respective school's

participation in the event. Some will walk before and/or after school, or during lunchtime.

“Safe Routes to School is a positive and collaborative effort that builds a healthier community by bringing together our schools, parents and students with city officials, public safety, health providers, and other partners,” said Dr. Pauline Hamel, project coordinator of New Bedford Mass in Motion/CORD. “We are very grateful to Mayor Mitchell and school officials, teachers and City departments their support of this partnership with Mass DOT/Mass RIDES, and we hope to see all our schools participating in the ‘Walk and Bike to School Day’ on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. However, walking activities must go far beyond single events in our schools and should continue throughout the year. This year, we will implement the Childhood Obesity Research Demonstration (CORD) project to increase physical activity throughout our communities.”

New Bedford, a *Let's Move City*, in partnership with U.S. Health and Human Services joined 500 leaders across America to adopt First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* campaign to make significant changes in community health. In 2010, New Bedford was recognized by MA Department of Transportation/Mass RIDES at their annual conference for being the MA city to have the largest number of schools enrolled as official partners of Safe Routes to School. A *Rookie of the Year* award was also granted to the Abraham Lincoln Elementary School during the conference for its efforts with the 2010 International Walk to School Day. For additional local information, please contact Dr. Pauline Hamel, New Bedford Mass in Motion/CORD Project Coordinator at (508) 380-7775.