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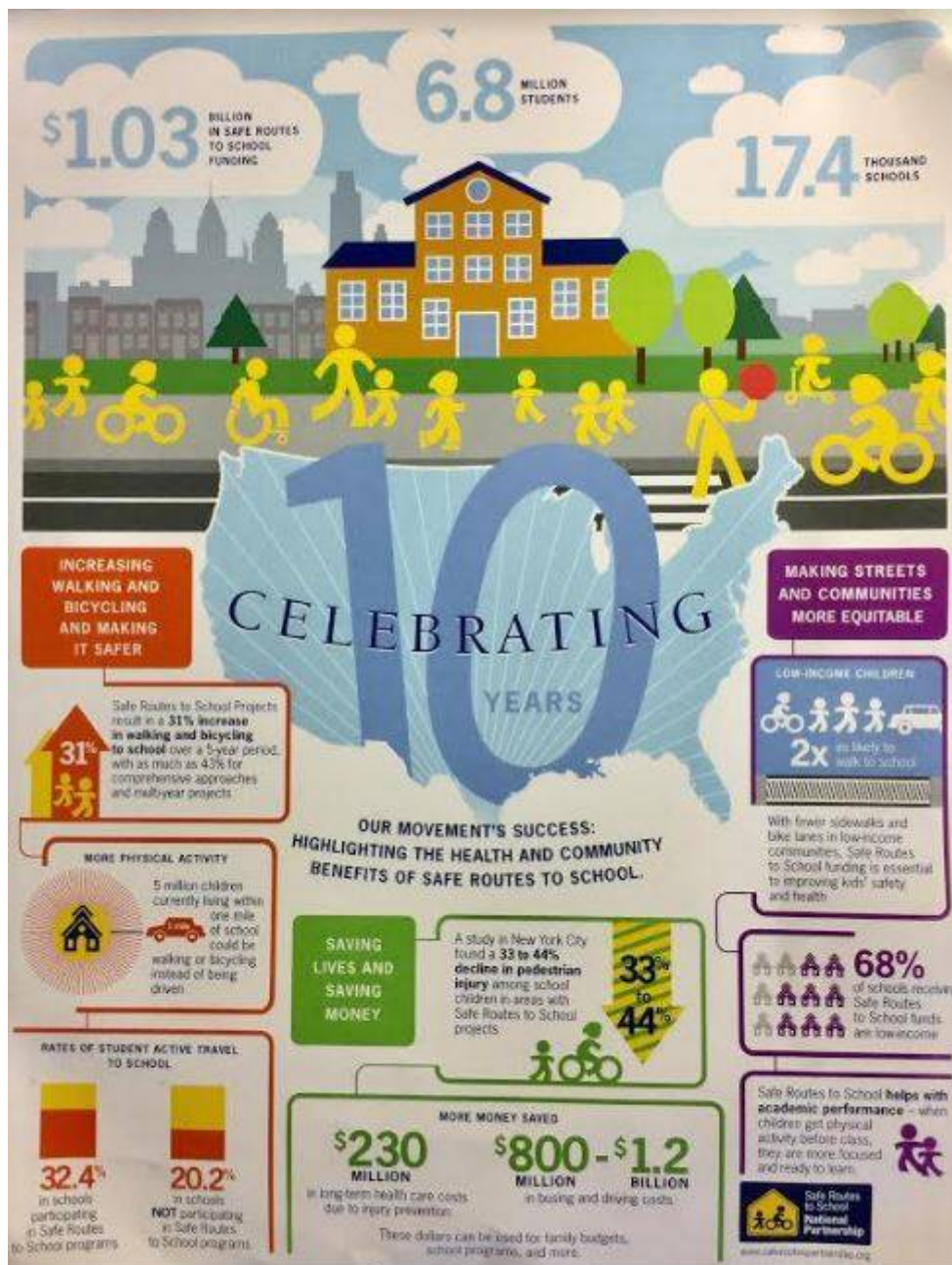
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[Health & Wellness](#)

## Focus on Student and Pedestrian Safety Initiatives at 2017 America Walks Summit

By PENNIE LANDRY

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ST. PAUL, MN - Student and pedestrian safety initiatives were addressed at the 2017 America Walks Summit. The third annual walking summit conference took place September 13-15.

New Jersey resident and America Walks Executive Director, Kate Kraft described vital and vibrant communities as ones that understand that the act of walking and the infrastructure that promotes walking for residents of all ages is fundamental to building vitality and vibrancy. Walking she said is: "Getting from Point A to Point B."

Conference hosts defined dialogue as: ‘Creative risk-taking; mutual questioning for understanding and meaning and advised that comprehensive planning, engaged elected and appointed leaders, active citizens advocates are all integral parts to establishing and realizing ‘vital and vibrant’ walking communities.

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Student Safety and Walking initiatives were central to the Summit. It was noted that in 1969, 50% of students (grades 1 through 12) walked to school. Today, only 13% of students walk or bike to school. Many towns shared that their Safe Routes to School initiatives were successful due to partnering with their local engineering, parks and recreation, public health and public safety departments.

### **What’s happening in Nutley NJ**

- October is ‘Walk To School Month’ nationally with many walking and educational events planned by SRTS across NJ. **Yantacaw Walks** will be awarding the “Golden Sneaker” to the class with the most walks overall during the current annual walk challenge that started September 20.
- [Yantacaw Walks started in 2014](#) as a Shaping NJ project, funded in part by a \$10,000 grant awarded to the Nutley Department of Health from the Partners for Health Foundation.
- Walker Walks is a pilot of the Nutley Walks to School program designed to promote walking to school. JHWMS Fall 2017 Walker pledge forms are being collected now as Kick-off for logging walks is Oct 2.
- Summit attendee Liz Brady, the leader of Let’s Walk weekly at the Nutley Farmer’s Market, said: “I look forward to expanding ‘Let’s Walk’ to the Seton Hall medical school campus, walking with students in the fall of 2018.”
- NJ Bike and Walk Coalition Executive Director Cyndi Steiner is working with Nutley resident Pennie Landry on potential funding for a ‘bike depot’ on the medical school campus. They have reached out to Nutley redevelopment planner Topology Inc. about plans to connect the campus to Nutley’s downtown via a walking/biking corridor.

### [Traffic Safety Bureau](#)

To learn about the Nutley pedestrian safety initiatives, TAPinto Nutley spoke with Officer Joseph O’Halloran of the Traffic Safety Bureau.

O'Halloran said the Nutley Police Department regularly conducts random decoy details where officers dress in street clothing and issue citations in cross walks. Decoy initiatives on county roads like Franklin Avenue are done in conjunction with the Essex County Sheriff's department and are financed with grant monies. According to O'Halloran, in 2014 within the course of a couple of hours, 59 vehicles were stopped and the following citations were issued.

- 31 pedestrian citations – failure to stop in cross walk etc
- 7 equipment violations – tinted windows etc.
- 3 cell phone violations
- 2 seat belt violations
- 1 careless driving
- 1 suspended license

While current data on more recent decoy details can be obtained by submitting an OPRA request, O'Halloran stated officers are stationed daily in front of the High School by Carvel. When citations are issued, violators are given 'safe streets' literature.

O'Halloran told TAPinto Nutley that he spoke at all five elementary schools in 2016 using Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) materials. Each student received a SRTS map. This year, due to budget restrictions, presentations are not planned in the district schools. The Township did not qualify for pedestrian safety grants this year according to O'Halloran.

Note: Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) Coordinators in cities and towns across America are responsible for bringing together various entities to work together on seeking funding opportunities, recruiting and training volunteers, leading task force committees and can be paid or volunteer. In some states, local governing boards can pass ordinances requiring that a percentage of traffic violations in school zones are used to fund 'Safe Routes to Schools' traffic calming measures.

Jackie Gifuni-Koutsouris, Program Associate with the Partners for Health Foundation in Montclair said: "It's wonderful to be at a conference surrounded by like-minded individuals from across the country. This is truly a great opportunity to bring new ideas back to implement in our local communities across New Jersey.

619 walking advocates from 45 states and 3 countries attended the Walking Summit. Attending from New Jersey were 24 individuals involved at various levels as walk champions across the state. Kathleen Smith, Program Director of NJ Partners for Health and America Walks board member welcomed the **NJ Walk**

**Summit scholarship recipients:**

1. Karen Lore, Bloomfield Director of Health and Welfare
2. Bonnie Flynn – Bloomfield Township
3. Pennie Landry, Founder, Nutley Citizens Community on Facebook
4. Liz Brady, Let's Walk! Coordinator New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition
5. Cyndi Steiner, Executive Director, New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition #njbikewalk
6. Janet Heroux, Independent Consultant, NJ Healthy Communities Network

[Yantacaw Walks](#) on [Facebook](#)

[Walker Walks](#) on [Twitter](#)

The [NJBWC](#) is dedicated to: PROTECTING the rights and safety of New Jersey bicyclists and walkers  
PROMOTING bicycling and walking for fun, fitness, and transportation  
EDUCATING bicyclists, walkers, and drivers about our rights and responsibilities  
CONNECTING our communities with a smarter transportation system

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