

## Walk to School

### For Immediate Release

#### **Mount Penn Elementary and WalkBikeBerks Celebrate a Year of Success, Safety, and Healthy Living**

**Wednesday, May 13, 2009 at 7:45 a.m.**

#### **[Redner's Warehouse Market](#)**

801 Carsonia Avenue  
Reading, PA 19606-1201

Lutz Funeral Home  
2100 Perkiomen Avenue  
Reading, PA 19606

**Mount Penn, PA** – **Mount Penn** Elementary School and WalkBikeBerks will wrap up their first Safe Routes to School Program year with a Walking School Bus Celebration on Wednesday, May 13, 2009.

Mount Penn Elementary Center was one of five Pennsylvania Schools awarded \$5,000 through a Pennsylvania Advocates and Nutrition [PANA] Safe Routes to School Academy Mini Grant. The purpose of the mini-grant award is to educate and encourage students to walk to school during a two-year program.

More than 400 students are invited to walk to school along with parents, teachers and community leaders.

**Commissioner Barnhardt, Mayor Nowotarski, Chief of Police Anthony Garipoli, Sr., Superintendent Dr. Mayes, Principal Hoffman, Executive Board Members of WalkBikeBerks, and the Excellent Teaching Staff of the Elementary Center** have committed to walking with us. The event will begin at 7:45 a.m. with kids, parents and community leaders walking from two destinations in the community: Redner's Warehouse Markets and Lutz Funeral Home. Walkers will arrive at the school by 8:30.

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, traffic congestion, concern for the environment and building connections between families, schools and the broader community.

Michele Bleacher, Assistant Principal at Mount Penn explains: "We had 97 students participate in our year long Walking Wednesday program. They were excited about walking and earning their sneaker charms. We took part in 2 survey's from PANA, Penn State Hershey that showed us kids are learning that walking is fun but also a great way to get some necessary exercise. Chief Garipoli has helped our cause by placing pedestrian signs throughout the community. Parents tell me how much they appreciate our concern. Next year we plan on continuing our Walking School Bus events and our Walking Wednesdays, and we'll add an event to promote bicycle safety. "

The event is being organized with WalkBikeBerks. WalkBikeBerks works to promote Safe Routes to School and Complete Streets county-wide. We would like to see every child in Berks County have the chance to safely walk or bicycle to school. Please join us as we make walking and bicycling practical, convenient, and safe in Berks County, Pennsylvania.

A Walking School Bus is simple to begin. Pick a single neighborhood that has a group of parents and children who are interested. Invite families who live nearby to participate. Pick a route and take a test

walk. Decide how often the group will walk together. Have fun!

A good time to begin is during International Walk to School Week on October 7, 2009 – International Walk to School Day in the USA! Walk and look for ways to encourage more children and families to be involved. Organize your Safe Routes to School Team today! WalkBikeBerks is eager to help you. Just ask!

For more information, contact Michele Barrett, President of WalkBikeBerks at [mbarrett@walkbikeberks.org](mailto:mbarrett@walkbikeberks.org) or visit PANA's Safe Routes to School Academy Web site at <http://www.srtsacademy.org/>.

**For additional information, please visit these Web sites:**

PANA Safe Routes to School Academy  
WalkBikeBerks  
International Walk to School in the USA  
National Center for Safe Routes to School

[www.srtsacademy.org](http://www.srtsacademy.org)  
<http://walkbikeberks.blogspot.com/>  
[www.walktoschool.org](http://www.walktoschool.org)  
[www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)

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