

National Walk, Bike, and Roll to School Day with the School of Instilling Goodness and Developing Virtue

Many of us have vivid memories as kids waiting for our friends to join us on the adventure of walking or biking to school all by ourselves. This empowered feeling of being all grown up and independent was so rewarding. National Walk, Bike and Roll to School Day does just that, to reinforce the power of establishing healthy, fun, active, and equally important, safe habits into our daily lives that will last a lifetime. Our Blue Zones Project Mendocino County team partnered with the County of Mendocino Public Health Department, and North Coast Opportunities Walk and Bike Mendocino, to host a Walk, Bike and Roll at School Day in partnership with the School of Instilling Goodness and Developing Virtue on the City of 10,000 Buddhas campus. The goal of this opportunity was to work with the parents and the students to show how much fun it can be to walk, bike, or roll to school. Active transportation to work, school, errands, or even appointments, for many people, can very well end up being the majority of the natural movement that they get in for that day and can therefore be an essential part of their health and wellbeing.

We discussed with the participants the current barriers that get in the way of active transportation for the students who go to school there in Talmage, CA. Here is a list of the most common barriers to walk or roll to school:

- Lived too far away.
- Didn't have access to a bicycle.
- Talmage Rd. does not have a safe, designated walk or bike lane leading from downtown or the Great Redwood Trail to the School Campus.
- Too many distracted drivers ie. on their phones, tired, running late.
- Not enough time.

Many attending families lived within an active transportations distance away from the school. Hearing these barriers from both the students and the parents was very important to asking the question what can be done to change the narrative and allow for more students (beyond the three students that walked or bike to school) to be able to ride or walk to school in the future. But the ultimate question is, what barriers exist for all of our schools and their students to walk, bike, or roll to school? Once we can identify the primary barrier, we can effectively work toward a solution. Together, with time, dedication, and opportunity we can make massive improvements. We must always keep in mind the importance of Health, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to ensure that there is equal access and opportunity for all. A special thanks to the School of Instilling Goodness and Developing Virtue for opening their campus and enjoying a fun walk and roll around campus before classes started. We had a great time and can't wait to experience more fun adventures with you all!

By: Ryan Veness

