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Walk to School Day promotes active lifestyles

A little rain wasn't going to dampen the spirits of thousands of students around Kane County as they took part in the annual International Walk to School Day event, Oct. 4.

With registrations still coming in, as many as 79 Kane County elementary and middle schools participated, an increase from last year, when 72 schools participated, representing eight of the county's school districts. Nearly a third of all participating schools in Illinois last year were from Kane County.

On Walk to School Day, schools from around the county, the United States, even the world, encourage students to walk or bike to school.

"Promoting an active lifestyle—such as walking to school—helps children get the regular activity they need, while forming healthy habits that can last a lifetime," said Barbara Jeffers, Kane county Health Department Executive Director..

Walk to School Day highlights the importance of developing safe and easy ways to increase the physical activity that makes kids healthier, and addresses priorities in the Fit Kids 2020 Plan. The hope is to make physical activity a routine part of everyone's day. Events such as this often grow into more frequent events due to the enthusiasm that walking- and biking-to-school events can inspire.

Organized by the Partnership for a Walkable America, Walk to School Day in the USA began in 1997 as a one-day event aimed at building awareness for the need for walkable communities. In 2000, the event became international when the UK and Canada (both of which had already been promoting walking to school) and the USA joined together for the first International Walk to School Day.

The Kane County event is made possible annually by the Fit for Kids Funders' Consortium: Rush-Copley Foundation, United Way of Elgin, Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley, Kane County Division of Transportation, and the Kane County Health Department. Learn more about Walk to School Day and the Fit for Kids Funders Consortium by visiting <http://www.makingkaneforkids.org/>

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