

Village of Mount Prospect and Community Consolidated School District 59 Safe Routes to School Grant Final Report

In 2008, the Village of Mount Prospect and Community Consolidated School District 59 was notified of the grant award for engineering and non-engineering projects totaling \$80,200 to increase safety and ease of students walking to and from school in Mount Prospect. For the purposes of this final report, only the non-engineering projects will be discussed as they relate to the Intergovernmental Agreement executed on September 30, 2008. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) awarded \$4,200 through the Safe Routes to School Program to fund the adult crossing guard program, the student patrol program, and personal safety program for students and parents of the school district. The following is a summary of items identified for the programs based on the available budget and needs of the school district and Police Department.

Crossing Guard & Student Patrol Programs

IDOT identified areas of need for the crossing guard program and the student patrol program. The school district currently has programs, but needed to formalize the training of crossing guards and student patrol volunteers. The Mount Prospect Police Department and the Community Consolidated School District 59 evaluated current equipment being used and training that was being offered to their crossing guards and patrols. Based on safety training and statistics, purchasing full vests for both the crossing guards and the student patrol, as opposed to using a student patrol belt, was determined to be the safest option for participants in the programs. Different types of safety vests were researched and based on quality and price, a vest that was class II ANSI compliant with a Velcro closure in the front was decided upon. These vests were purchased in the "fluorescent yellow" color with reflective material on them in different sizes to accommodate the different sizes of children and adults that are currently involved with and any future volunteers that will come through the school district and serve the school community through the crossing guard/student patrol program. Since the schools depend on volunteers during inclement weather to safely move the students to and from school safely, part of the grant money would be allocated towards higher visibility rain coats. Raincoats were purchased instead of ponchos due to the durability of the material and the life of the raincoat over the poncho. "Fluorescent yellow" colored raincoats with similar reflective material to the safety vests were purchased for program



participants. These raincoats meant higher visibility, which is number one to remaining safe in inclement weather.



To help continue with visibility at the crossings, traditional school crossing signs were re-created on a lightweight durable material, with metal stands, to withstand the elements. These signs will be placed out at crossings each morning and afternoon to alert motorists in the area that they need to slow down and be alert for children crossing the street. The color chosen for these signs were as close to the "fluorescent yellow" color that the safety vests and raincoats are. When these signs are placed, the intention is to give an

extra reminder to exercise caution for the motorists in the area.

After evaluating the stop signs that the school had for the crossing guard programs, replacing them would not have been beneficial. But based on feedback from the schools, we identified one crossing in particular that was more travelled by students and vehicles than any others. For this location, we used allotted funds to purchase an LED high visibility stop sign, which is a re-chargeable battery operated stop sign that illuminates when it is in the upright position. The stop sign has a cutoff switch when it is placed any other direction than upright to maintain a longer battery life. This sign will become more beneficial in winter months when daylight hours are limited, especially at school drop-off and pick-up times.



After researching resources available to educate student patrol and crossing guard participants, AAA were able to provide training DVDs free of charge. The AAA's student patrol and adult crossing guard training DVD will be used as supplemental information to formalize the training for the programs. In the past, each school's patrol coordinator would be responsible for training. With the formalization of the training program, the proper and safest way to perform the various duties associated with being a patrol member or crossing guard will be taught by the Police Department.

This ensures uniformity in how the students are crossed. The program teaches student patrol members to not enter the street or attempt to direct traffic. Instead, patrol members are to stay on the sidewalk of the crossing and then allow the students to cross when it is safe. The formalized program also discusses the importance of the children being courteous and polite to everyone and to conduct themselves as role models. Students are also given the opportunity to ask questions or voice any concerns they may have. With the crossing guards, the training states that participants are not to be



directing traffic and explains the differing roles of the student patrol and what they should expect when a crossing guard and student patrol are working a crossing with each other. Training is scheduled at the beginning of each school year and a patrol outing/year-end review is scheduled at the end of each school year to reward the students for their dedication and to obtain feedback on possible improvements on the program in the future.

Personal Safety Program

The purpose of the Personal Safety Program is to train district personnel, students, staff and parents on proper pedestrian and bike crossing strategies as well as personal safety skills. The grant was used to purchase items to promote bicycle safety and to inform parents and students about walking and crossing streets safely. Bike rodeos have been scheduled for the spring with each school, which are a great way to instruct the students individually and to teach them the basic skills of riding a bicycle safely. At these rodeos instructors also take the opportunity to promote wearing a helmet while riding a bicycle. Students may not participate in the rodeos without a proper fitting bicycle helmet. Using the grant the Police Department purchased a supply of helmets to give to the students whose parents are unable to afford them. The rodeos are also an opportunity to make sure the bicycles are in proper working order and members from the police department's bicycle unit

perform routine maintenance and share knowledge with parents about upkeep of their children's bicycle. Bicycle shop owners will be invited to volunteer their time to perform bike repairs as needed. The rodeo will also be used to register every bicycle with the Village of Mount Prospect. Applications with pertinent information are filled out and a corresponding bicycle license sticker is affixed to the frame of the bicycle. In the event that a bicycle is stolen, or found, the license number will help the police department locate the owner and reunite them with their bicycle.

Bicycle locks were purchased with durability and ease of use in mind for the students. Combination locks were chosen over key locks since some children may not be able to be responsible for keeping a key and not losing it. The bicycle locks will be given out to the children that need them.

Posters promoting the use of bicycle helmets and bicycle locks will be hung throughout the schools to promote awareness. Posters informing the students on crossing the street safely and walking to school safely will also be hung throughout the school. Safety information will be sent home in the school newsletter to all parents to allow parents to talk with their students about safety, in turn, reinforcing the police department's message through the safe routes to school program.