



**EZ RIDE PARTNERS WITH 55 SCHOOLS AND 15 MUNICIPALITIES  
THROUGHOUT NEW JERSEY TO PROMOTE SAFE AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLES  
WITH SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

*October is International Walk to School Month*

**WOOD-RIDGE, NEW JERSEY—OCTOBER 3, 2017**—This October, **EZ Ride** will celebrate its sixth year as the regional coordinating organization for the **Safe Routes to School** program with collaborations in 55 schools, 15 municipalities and several hundred local partners in Bergen, Essex, Monmouth, Passaic and Union Counties that encourage healthy and safe lifestyles among school-aged children and their families.

Since 2011 EZ Ride has collaborated with government agencies, private foundations, local non-profits and others qualified entities to increase awareness of bike and pedestrian safety by:

- Identifying priorities and possible funding sources for programming geared towards school-aged children and their families;
- Supporting local coordinators who host local safety events such as walk/bike to school days, bike rodeos, poster contests, bike or pedestrian safety education events, mileage contests, and even free bike helmets;
- Conducting Walkability Audits and creating actionable travel plans based on the findings;

To date, EZ Ride has helped secure \$580,000 in grants for programs in six municipalities including Plainfield, New Jersey.

“We began working with EZ Ride in 2015 in response to an overwhelming number of pedestrian car accidents for a town that is only six square miles,” Adrian Mapp, Mayor of Plainfield. “EZ Ride helped us secure a \$20,000 Healthy Community Network Grant that we used to incorporate safe walking education into the curriculum of elementary and middle schools, conduct walkability studies, and we ultimately received \$304,000 in additional funding for infrastructure improvements.”



“I am delighted to participate in “Walk to school” days with our students and faculty from our local elementary schools. Being out and reinforcing safe habits for our children when they walk to or from school, and the positive benefits of walking is part of our overall wellness initiative in the Borough, said Westwood Mayor John Birkner, Jr. “We live in a busy community, so teaching our students about safe practices for crossing streets is important.”

“Our annual Walk to School Day events encourage all of our students to get their day started in a safe and healthy way, said Joseph V. Fleres, Director of Elementary Education for the Bloomfield School District. “These events have been met with great success and promote an overall healthy lifestyle for all. It brings the community together to help facilitate a common goal.”

“The Safe Routes to School program complements EZ Ride’s core mission to improve the quality of life for individuals of all ages,” said Krishna Murthy, Executive Director for EZ Ride. “By encouraging children to walk or bike to school, we are tackling the obesity epidemic, while reducing traffic congestion and air pollution in areas surrounding schools.”

As an additional element to the Safe Routes to School activities, EZ Ride works with leaders in many communities including Plainfield, Scotch Plains and Long Branch to improve and increase access to fresh and healthy food by implementing community gardens, and working with bodegas to offer them incentives to encourage them to offer healthy food options.

On Thurs., Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>, EZ Ride will host its annual recognition event that includes Safe Routes to School awards to highlight communities that have achieved meaningful change through its walking and bicycling program, and share best practices throughout the counties that it serves.

Safe Routes to School is one of many programs and initiatives that EZ Ride manages to create safe, appealing and convenient transportation options in New Jersey.



For more information about EZ Ride's Safe Routes to School programs or other transportation programs and services, call 201.939.4242 or visit [www.ezride.org](http://www.ezride.org).

### **Safe Routes to School (SRTS)**

Safe routes to school is a federal, state and local effort to improve the health and well-being of children by enabling and encouraging children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school; make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and to facilitate the planning, development and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

### **About EZ Ride**

Founded in 1983, Meadowlands Transportation Brokerage Corporation d/b/a EZ Ride is a non-profit, public private partnership with a mission to implement transportation programs and services that enhance the quality of life, regional mobility, and economic opportunity for both people and businesses, while reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality in New Jersey. Ryde4Life is one of several programs that EZ Ride manages to promote healthy lifestyle choices for New Jerseyans of all ages.

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