

Does size matter with the Walking School Bus? **Yes!!!**

Last semester was epic! We ended up with 13 schools, 553 kids, 37 routes and 206 volunteers. However, as the evaluations came in and we began to work on sustaining the program going into year two, it became clear that the size of a Walking School Bus program makes a tremendous difference.

A larger program makes the results more evident. For example, the program in Great Bend had 90 kids and therefore completely changed the community. As a result, the teachers had enough children in the program to notice a difference in the classroom behavior and the school saw a 40% reduction in the number of tardies. The Superintendent has already vowed to financially sustain not only that program but four additional programs next year. Had the Walking School Bus in Great Bend had 10 kids, no one would have even noticed.

Now that said.....size is relative to the community and its resources. Maybe a "large" program for you is 25 kids, or maybe it's just a matter of momentum? You see, probably the most important determinate of if your program is financially sustained is your program's momentum. Is it growing? Is it larger this semester than last? Do we finish strong?

You have about 2 weeks to finish recruiting volunteers. That's 14 days. 14 days that may well determine if a Walking School Bus continues to exist in your community. Let's crush it! Every day matters! I'd love to see every single program be larger this semester than it was last semester. That would show tremendous momentum!

Even if you personally have no interest in being the Coordinator next year, you can make all the difference on if the program exists next year. Then you can pass the baton on to someone else!

What you do over the next 14 days may impact how kids are transported to school in your community for years to come. In fact, it will have implications statewide! Can we prove that the Walking School Bus can save the State of Kansas money and potentially save a generation of children from inactivity and obesity related disease?

I'm offering a challenge. If you ask three new people per day between now and March 17th if they will volunteer for the Walking School Bus, I'll give you a \$50 Amazon Gift Card. Here are the "rules."

1. This is entirely based on the "honor system." I have no way to know if you actually asked the people or not. However, I'd like for you to keep track of who you asked and when. Why? Because you have to ask 45 people and you won't remember otherwise! : -) So you will need to document your "asks" somehow.

2. These asks **must be face-to-face** and you must ask the question, "**will you volunteer for our Walking School Bus program?**" In other words, don't talk about how much you need volunteers and then say "let me know if you'd like to help....." That usually doesn't work as you never give the person an opportunity to say "yes" or "no." Instead, put them on the "spot." Really ask the question. Make them give you a "yes" or "no."

Remember back to when you were dating.....if someone came up to you and chatted for five minutes about how they need some dates and then walked away, you wouldn't of been impressed and they wouldn't of been successful in obtaining your company. However, if they went up to you and said, "I'd like to take you on a date this Saturday night, will you go on a date with me?" You would have totally understood and had to answer them directly. You must obtain 45 direct "yes" or "no's" by March 17th for the gift card.

I'm paying for these gift cards myself, so please take me up on this offer. I think you'll be blown away at how many volunteers you get. 

Take care,

Robert

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