



**ENERGIZE YOUR LIFE!**  
**EAT HEALTHY-BE ACTIVE**

This newsletter is produced by the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington* to enhance communication and coordination among those who educate Washington families about nutrition and food. *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators* shares brief information about programs and materials that support healthful and enjoyable eating.

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#### SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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To access past issues, go to  
<http://nutrition.wsu.edu/take5/index.html>.

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## This Month's Focus- *Bicycling*

Riding a bike, whether for transportation or recreation, is a great way to improve health. It's good for the cardiovascular system, it's associated with lower rates of obesity and overweight, and is an easy way to burn calories. Bicycling is good for emotional health: people who bike to work, instead of by car, report that they are less stressed and more relaxed. Kids and teens who bike to school develop a habit when they are young to use their bikes for transportation. And it is certainly better for the environment. In the [June 2013 issue](#) of *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators* we explored walking as a valuable way to get physical exercise. This issue focuses on bicycling as another key way to get enjoyable exercise.



**Bicycling Safely to School** – If students enjoy walking and bicycling to school and can do so safely, they're on the path to a lasting change in their own transportation to school and other destinations as they grow into adulthood. To educate middle school students about bicycle and pedestrian safety, Washington's Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and Department of Transportation

(DOT) collaborated with the Bicycle Alliance of Washington and Feet First to develop, implement, and evaluate a safety education program. The curriculum is designed for physical education teachers of students in grades 5 to 8 to help youth to become safer bike users and more aware pedestrians. Throughout Washington State, 25 school districts received grants to cover activities to teach the program in 2011 and 2012, and the grant's funding enables the resources to be available to all school districts at the Safe Routes to School in Washington website. The grant reached **25** school districts comprising **48** schools, and trained **121** teachers who delivered the curriculum to over **10,000** students between January 2011 and June 2012. Participating districts intend to continue teaching the curriculum to their students, thereby reaching an additional 7,000 to 10,000 students each year. In 2013, additional grants will be provided. Resources including lesson plans, handouts, surveys for parents and students, and more are all available at no cost at [www.saferouteswa.org/schools-safety-education-curriculum-and-resources.aspx](http://www.saferouteswa.org/schools-safety-education-curriculum-and-resources.aspx).

To see the evaluation results in various school districts, go to [www.k12.wa.us/healthfitness/SafeRoutes.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/healthfitness/SafeRoutes.aspx). Feedback from teachers reinforced that students were walking and biking more safely. Four school districts reported that residents or the local police commented about how more youth were out biking and that they were exhibiting safer behavior. One teacher commented that while teaching the class the first year, "some of my kids decided they were going to ride their bikes to school every day! This idea has spread and we now have some unicyclists attempting to ride every day as well."

Another teacher stated, "This program supplies schools with resources necessary to not only teach kids about bike and pedestrian safety but also practicing those activities. The exposure to a wonderful lifelong activity such as biking is an asset to our community. The feasibility of using a bike as transportation in our community is reinforced with our students when they participate in this program."

For more information, please contact: Sarah Butzine, OSPI, 360-725-6039 [Sarah.Butzine@k12.wa.us](mailto:Sarah.Butzine@k12.wa.us) ; Charlotte Claybrook, Department of Transportation, 360-705-7302 [ClaybrC@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:ClaybrC@wsdot.wa.gov); or James Kisse, Department of Health, 360-236-3623 [James.Kisse@doh.wa.gov](mailto:James.Kisse@doh.wa.gov).

**Bicycling Programs in Communities across Our State** – The Bicycle Alliance of Washington (see brief above) serves as a tremendous resource for people who want to encourage cycling and cycling safety. Seth Schromen-Wawrin manages the Safe Routes to School program with the goal to have every student in Washington go through safety education. He has helpful suggestions for finding low-cost or free bicycles, although they vary widely from one community to the next. Some police departments offer bicycles that have been left on buses or have been abandoned but in need of repair. Some towns have free programs in which a student earns a bike by learning to build a bike or fix a recycled one. An example is the Earn-A-Bike Program through Bike Works which also does school programs offering bikes to low income youth; see [www.bikeworks.org](http://www.bikeworks.org). Seth also mentions that free helmets may be available through fire departments, hospitals, or police



departments. Another program serving low-income youth is offered through the Cascade Bicycle Club Education Foundation named after Major Taylor, the first African-American professional cyclist, [www.cbcef.org/youth-major-taylor.html](http://www.cbcef.org/youth-major-taylor.html). For a list of non-profit organizations in various communities that provide bike safety education and helpful resources, see the Bicycle Alliance's list at: <http://bicyclealliance.org/growing-bicycling/resources/> (Contact: Seth Schromen-Wawrin, Safe Routes to School Program Manager, Bicycle Alliance of Washington, 206-224-9252 x 301, [SethS@bicyclealliance.org](mailto:SethS@bicyclealliance.org).)

**Bicycling Helps Meet State Health Objectives** – Five years ago, the *Washington State Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan* called for measures for environmental and policy approaches to improve the health of our residents. It includes three key physical activity objectives:

1. Increase the number of people who have access to free or low cost recreational opportunities for physical activity.
2. Increase the number of physical activity opportunities available to children.
3. Increase the number of active community environments in Washington.

The documents includes many suggestions to make bicycling more accessible to Washingtonians by modifying transportation policy to promote bicycling, enhancing the safety and perceived safety of communities so that people feel more comfortable using their bikes, and more. To read the 2008 plan (updated from 2002), go to <http://depts.washington.edu/waaction/plan/>.

**Plan Ahead for National Bike to School Day** – It's not too early to start thinking about local events to celebrate Bike to School Day which is celebrated across the country in May of each year. Schools and communities can gear up and ride again during next year's event which has been set for May 7, 2014. In 2013, 1,704 events took place, including 37 in Washington State. To find out about this past year's local events and get contact information, see the map at [www.walkbiketoschool.org/go/who-biked/2013](http://www.walkbiketoschool.org/go/who-biked/2013). For further information, go to [www.walkbiketoschool.org/ready/about-the-events/bike-to-school-day](http://www.walkbiketoschool.org/ready/about-the-events/bike-to-school-day).

**Bicycling and Military Readiness – What's the Connection?** Military leaders have joined the call to invest in the walkability and bikeability of American neighborhoods. *Mission: Readiness* is concerned about the impact of child and teen obesity on national security, citing its research that 75% of 17- to 24-year olds in the US cannot serve in the military, and one of the main reasons is overweight. The organization recommends investing in infrastructure that promotes walking and biking so that young people can be more physically fit. *Mission: Readiness* is a nonpartisan national security organization of senior retired military leaders which urges investments in the health of children, particularly for dedicated bicycle and pedestrian projects. See [www.missionreadiness.org](http://www.missionreadiness.org). For more information, type <http://www.missionreadiness.org/wp-content/uploads/PA-Transportation-Brief.pdf> into your internet browser. We apologize for the inconvenience; the brief was not available for linking into this issue of our newsletter.

**Bicycling and Health Research** – For studies on the benefits of bicycling among children and adults, see the list provided by the organization Bikes Belong at [www.bikesbelong.org/resources/stats-and-research/statistics/health-statistics](http://www.bikesbelong.org/resources/stats-and-research/statistics/health-statistics).

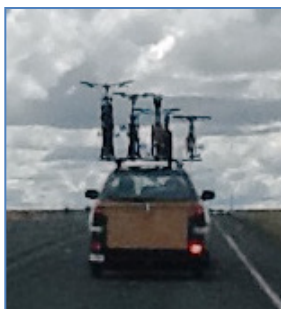
**OUR MISSION:** *The Nutrition Education Network* coordinates nutrition education efforts to communicate consistent, positive and relevant messages to increase awareness of healthful and enjoyable eating among low-income families. *Energize* is one way that *the Network* shares information and resources to accomplish this mission.

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## TOOLS OF THE TRADE



**Physical Activity Is a Family Affair** – As part of its 10 Tips series, ChooseMyPlate offers a colorful one-page handout that lists simple activities that parents can do with their kids, many of which don't cost a dime. Type <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/TenTips/DGTipsheet29BeAnActiveFamily.pdf> into your internet browser to download the handout. We apologize for the inconvenience; the handout was not available for linking into this issue of our newsletter.

**National Nutrition Education Standards** – In July, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) released a report from a workshop of national experts to discuss the merits of developing national nutrition education curriculum standards. The reason? The IOM's 2012 report, *Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention: Solving the Weight of the Nation*, recommended schools as a focal point for preventing obesity and also recommended

the development of a set of standards for K-12 education. During the workshop, participants identified current promising practices in federal, state, and local programs, and suggested approaches to build acceptance and use among school educators. The report can be read online and downloaded for free at [www.iom.edu/Reports/2013/Nutrition-Education-in-the-K-12-Curriculum.aspx?utm\\_source=SNEB+Members+2013&utm\\_campaign=6be0edf6ec-Weekly\\_Policy\\_Update06\\_17\\_13&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_359eacdb40-6be0edf6ec-333066265](http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2013/Nutrition-Education-in-the-K-12-Curriculum.aspx?utm_source=SNEB+Members+2013&utm_campaign=6be0edf6ec-Weekly_Policy_Update06_17_13&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_359eacdb40-6be0edf6ec-333066265).

## WASHINGTON GROWN

**Fresh This Month** – What an abundance of local produce we have this month! Truly our farmers' markets have fruits and vegetables from A to Z. Here's what this newsletter's writer found at her local farmers' market: amaranth, blueberries, corn, daikon, eggplant, Fuji apples, green beans, hot peppers, iceberg lettuce, J H Hale peaches, kohlrabi, lemon cucumbers, melon, nectarines, onions, pluots, quince, Russian kale, spinach, tomatoes, uva (Latin for grape), (no V), watermelon, (no X), yellow summer squash, and zucchini. It might be fun to challenge people in a nutrition education class to do their own scavenger hunt to see what foods they can find by the alphabet. Try looking for Vanilla Beans and Ximenia (Yellow Plum) to fill in the whole alphabet.



**Washington Grown Web Site** – What local foods are in season now? How do Washington foods contribute to our economy? What are the ways that our foods are part of a healthy diet? What's it like to be a farmer in our state today? Washington Grown's beautiful web site [www.wagrown.com](http://www.wagrown.com) answers these questions with colorful information and videos of family farmers who produce food for our tables.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Take a stab at guessing which state ranks Number 1 as the most bicycle-friendly state in the nation. Yes, it's our very own Washington State that tops them all. The League of American Bicyclists assesses all 50 states each year in six key areas: legislation, policies and programs, infrastructure, education and encouragement, evaluation and planning, and enforcement. Colorado ranks Number 2, followed by Oregon. For the ranking, see [www.bikeleague.org/bfa/awards](http://www.bikeleague.org/bfa/awards).



### EAT TOGETHER EAT BETTER – Family Meals Focus

*Because our readers have told us that Family Meals is a hot topic, in the May 2011 issue we began a small section on recent news relating to this topic and our long-standing signature program, Eat Together, Eat Better.*

The following research study about family meals has implications for nutrition educators:

**Teens in families with positive interpersonal dynamics during mealtime ate more vegetables and had lower BMIs.** Although research to date has shown that family meals tend to be protective against obesity, the mechanism hasn't been known. In this study, family meals were not lengthy (20 minutes on average), were

generally served family style, and did not end with dessert. The authors suggest that nutrition educators talk with families about the importance of specific components of interpersonal dynamics at family meals, which are described in detail. (Source: Berge, JM et al, "Structural and interpersonal characteristics of family meals: Associations with adolescent body mass index and dietary patterns." *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 113(6):816-822, 2013.)

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