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News Release

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Durham Celebrates Walk to School Day October 4

*Lakewood Elementary School Students, Parents, Teachers & Community Leaders Will
Walk Together to School*

DURHAM, N.C. – On Wednesday, October 4, Durham will join the rest of the nation in celebrating the benefits of walking to school on International Walk to School Day.

The N.C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has selected Durham's [Lakewood Elementary School](#) for a special Walk to School Day event on October 4. Organized by the Friends of Lakewood Elementary Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and the City of Durham Transportation Department, NCDOT representatives will join Lakewood students, parents, teachers, and community leaders in a walk to the school.

The event will begin at 7:15 a.m. when students, parents and community leaders will gather at the Scrap Exchange, located in the Lakewood Shopping Center at 2050 Chapel Hill Rd. Walkers will leave the shopping center at 7:30 a.m. and arrive at the school at 7:45 a.m. Once at the school, all students will meet for a brief celebration led by Principal James Hopkins, Durham City Councilmember Steve Schewel and other special guests.

According to City Transportation Director Terry Bellamy, the Lakewood event ties in with the [City's Vision Zero](#) traffic safety program, which includes educational outreach to children on pedestrian and bicycle safety. "Walk to School Day events raise awareness of the need to create safer routes for walking and bicycling and emphasize the importance of issues such as increasing physical activity among children, pedestrian safety, traffic congestion, and concern

for the environment,” Bellamy said. “These events build connections between families, schools and the broader community and we’re excited to be an event sponsor this year.”

One of the first schools in Durham to hold Walk to School Day was Club Boulevard Elementary School. Parent Mark Dessauer worked with school staff and other parents to create an event that is eagerly anticipated by students at the school each year. Seeing the success of the Club Boulevard effort, Jennifer McDuffie, a member of the [City’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission](#), began to organize Walk to School Days at other Durham schools, which have received guidance and support from Jennifer Delcourt, an Active Routes to School regional coordinator. Other Durham schools also celebrating Walk to School Day during the month of October include Club Boulevard Magnet Elementary School, E.K. Powe Elementary School, Morehead Montessori Magnet Elementary School, Parkwood Elementary School, Pearsontown Magnet Elementary School, Southwest Elementary School and Y.E. Smith Elementary Museum School.

For additional information about Walk to School Day, visit [Active Routes to School Region 5](#) and the [National Center for Safe Routes to School](#). For information on Durham’s Lakewood School event, contact Dale McKeel with the City’s Transportation Department at (919) 560-4366. ext. 36421 or Dale.McKeel@DurhamNC.gov.

About Walk to School Day

[Walk to School Day](#) was established in the United States in 1997 by the *Partnership for a Walkable America*. Canada and Great Britain already had walk to school programs in place. In 2000, these three countries joined together to create International Walk to School Day. In May 2006, the National Center for Safe Routes to School was established to assist communities in enabling and encouraging children to safely walk and bike to school. Walk to School Day began as a simple idea – children and parents, school and local officials walking to school together on a designated day. It is an energizing event, reminding everyone of the simple joy of walking to school, the health benefits of regular daily activity, and the need for safe places to walk and bike. Schools focus on health, safety, physical activity and concern for the environment. Organizations supporting International Walk to School Day in the U.S. include America Walks, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Highway Administration, Institute of Transportation Engineers, National Center for Safe Routes

to School, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Safe Kids Worldwide, and the Safe Routes to School National Partnership.

About the City of Durham Transportation Department

The [Transportation Department](#) is responsible for a broad range of transportation services, which include traffic signs and signals, transportation planning, [parking operations](#), street lighting, taxicab administration, and bicycle and pedestrian planning. The department also oversees [GoDurham](#) and [GoDurham ACCESS](#) as well as leads planning functions for the [Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization \(DCHC MPO\)](#), which is the regional organization that is responsible for planning and programming state and federal transportation projects in the urbanized areas of Durham, Orange, and Chatham counties. Guided by the City's [Strategic Plan](#), the department helps to strengthen the foundation, enhance the value, and improve the quality and sustainability of neighborhoods that are necessary for a strong and diverse community.

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