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Safe Kids Johnson County Celebrates Walk to School Day

(Olathe, Kan.) October 6, 2015 –Safe Kids Johnson County will join local school children, parents, caregivers and FedEx volunteers on Wednesday, Oct. 7 to raise awareness about pedestrian safety on International Walk to School Day. More than 250,000 children across the United States will be participating in the annual event to learn about walking safely and to encourage the creation of safe walking environments. Many schools in Johnson County are joining in the fun.

This year, Green Springs Elementary School (14675 S. Alden Street, Olathe, KS 66062), in the Olathe School District is celebrating the event with a safety-themed event from 9 – 11:30 a.m. A FedEx truck will be there to demonstrate driver's blind spots and how children can avoid accidents from happening. Students will receive traffic safety tips as well as pedestrian safety tips from Safe Kids Johnson County.

It is alarmingly common for children to get hit by a vehicle while walking. Recently released data reports 444 kids were killed in 2013 after being hit while walking. And 16,000 more were injured; that's 44 children hurt every day. With kids back in school, now is the perfect time for a refresher course on walking safety.

"Parents know to teach their children to look left, right and left again before crossing the street," said Katie Schatte, Safe Kids Johnson County coordinator. "But that's just the beginning. As kids get older, they're walking on their own, crossing unfamiliar streets and are out when it's dark. With just a few more simple tips, kids will be much safer while walking."

Safe Kids and FedEx are teaming up to bring families these five simple tips to help keep kids safe on the road.

- Teach kids at an early age to look left, right and left again before crossing the street. Then remind them to continue looking until safely across.
- Teach kids to put phones, headphones and devices down when crossing the street. It is particularly important to reinforce this message with teenagers.
- It's always best to walk on sidewalks or paths and cross at street corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks. If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible.

- Children under 10 need to cross the street with an adult. Every child is different, but developmentally, most kids are unable to judge the speed and distance of oncoming cars until age 10.
- If kids are walking when it's dark out, teach them to be especially alert and make sure they are visible to drivers. Have them wear light- or brightly-colored clothing and reflective gear.

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About Johnson County, Kansas

Located in the southwestern quadrant of the Kansas City Metropolitan Region, Johnson County, Kansas is a community of choice with a current population of more than 560,000, making it the most populated of the 105 counties in Kansas, but traditionally having the lowest mill levy in the state. For more information visit the county's website at www.jocogov.org.