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## Perris Kids Participate in Walk-to-School Day

Hundreds of Perris school students gave up the comfort and speed of riding to classes Wednesday to put on their tennis shoes, strap on backpacks and hoof it to their neighborhood campuses—part of the City’s commitment to International Walk-to-School Day.

Mayor Pro-Tem Tonya Burke led the Perris contingent of elected officials, administrators and City staff members who supported the get-out-and-exercise event, which continues to grow in popularity. Walk-to-school events took place at nine Perris school sites.

Burke arrived before 7 a.m. at Frank Eaton Memorial Park for the nearly one-mile walk to Avalon Elementary School. She found more than 350 students parents rarin’ to go.

“This is a surprise—and a pleasant one,” Burke said. “People get excited when they can do little things to help themselves and improve their quality of life. I am pleased the City of Perris supports this type of event. It feels terrific.”



Parents and children make their way from Frank Eaton Memorial Park to Avalon Elementary School Wednesday as part of the International Walk to School Day, which drew hundreds of participants.

Burke noted that the City will resume free, twice-weekly workouts at various parks beginning Oct. 13. Those workouts piggyback on the highly successful weekend workouts that drew hundreds of participants in 2014. Upon arriving at Avalon, the mayor pro-tem handed out book bags, pens and other goodies to elementary school children and their parents. She also addressed a morning assembly.

“You made history in Perris today!” she said. “This was one of our largest walks ever.”

The throng of students and parents at Eaton Park included those who regularly walk to the Avalon campus as well as those who most often drive to school. Kids and parents said walking to school provides several benefits—exercise, reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality.



Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Tonya Burke hands out book bags to students at Avalon Elementary School.

Army SFC Terrence Banks called Wednesday’s walk “all about walking and making memories” with his daughter, Lyric, 9. Banks’ time in the military includes tours in Afghanistan and Iraq. This year’s walk was the first time he took part in the international event.

“I love supporting my daughter,” Banks said.

Veronica Tucker walked with her daughter, Anastacia Martinez, 7. The second-grader is active in a variety of sports and is a member of Avalon’s 100-mile club, students who complete that distance by walking laps around the school campus. She also wrestles. Her favorite amateur wrestler: Jordan Burroughs. Her favorite pro: The Undertaker.

Anastacia said she enjoys walking to school because she can “walk, talk, jog or run.”

“It’s fun to walk with my mom,” she said.

Tucker said she supports the walk to school because it makes for a stronger neighborhood and community.

“There’s so many people here,” she said. “That’s so exciting.”



Perris mom Veronica Tucker with her daughter, Anastacia Martinez, 7, before beginning the walk from Frank Eaton Memorial Park to Avalon Elementary School Wednesday.

Desmond Prescott walked with his children, Brandon, 8, and Gabrielle, 7. He said the walk-to-school day is important because it reinigorates community spirit and promotes a healthy lifestyle.

“It’s fun to see the kids enjoying themselves while they’re doing something that’s fun and healthy,” Prescott said.



Perris resident Desmond Prescott and his son, Brandon, 8, en route from Frank Eaton Memorial Park to Avalon Elementary School Wednesday.

International Walk to School Day began in 1997 and has since grown into a global event with more than 40 countries participating, including the U.S. Canada, Mexico, Great Britain, Ireland, France, Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Italy, India, Australia and New Zealand.

Nine schools in Perris took part in the event. Besides Avalon, City staff supported the walk-to-school day programs at Perris Elementary and Triple Crown Elementary schools.

Perris staff members who supported the City’s walk-to-school 2015 included Ron Carr, Darren Madkin, Isabel Carlos, Michelle Clay, Arcenio Ramirez, Saida Amozgar, Monica Martinez, Arturo Cervantes, Marilyn Fernholz, Crystal Lopez, Rosalba Bonilla, Josh Estrada and Sarina Brannon.

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