



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Ulster County

10 Westbrook Lane
Kingston, NY 12401-2928
Phone 845.340.3990
Fax 845.340.3993
Website: www.cce.cornell.edu/ulster

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Contact: Jude DeFalco
Marketing and Production
845-340-3990
www.cceulster.org

Safe Routes to Schools and Parks Committee Seeks Volunteers

Fieldwork includes using technology to map routes in Kingston.

The Safe Routes to Schools and Parks (SRTSP) committee seeks volunteers for its work in mapping routes to schools and parks in the City of Kingston as well as organizing “Walk to School” days and creating “Walking School Buses.” The committee’s next meeting is March 23 at 6 p.m. at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Ulster County office at 10 Westbrook Lane in Kingston.

“We’re looking for volunteers – adults and youth – to do a variety of tasks that include working on a community mapping team, coordinating walk and bike to school days, collecting data, and assisting with a ‘Walking School Bus’ project,” said Kristen Wilson, committee co-chair and project director of A Healthy Kingston for Kids. “Some of the participants will get a chance to learn how to use technologies such as GPSs and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to map routes to parks and schools. This is part of an effort to assess infrastructure, safety, and social barriers to walking and biking to school. The data gathered will then be used to identify projects aimed at making it safe to walk and bike to school.”

The committee is part of the recently announced Healthy Kingston for Kids project, which is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and lead by the Cornell Cooperative Extension Ulster County. Partners include the City of Kingston, the Kingston City School District, the Kingston Land Trust, the Community Heart Health Coalition, Gilmour Planning, the Rose Women’s Care Service, and the Ulster County Health and Planning departments.

The SRTSP committee positions include:

- Members of the GIS community mapping team, which is charged with organizing and executing a city-wide community mapping effort. The positions available include adults and youth to help gather data with GPS units.
- Volunteer coordinators at middle and elementary schools in the district to help with a “Walking School Bus” project. This includes “Walking School Bus” assistants.

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

- Volunteer leaders to serve as point persons for organizing “Walk and Bike to School Days” at each school in the district. This includes assistants at each school to help out during the event.
- Volunteer leaders to work on the parks component of the project. This team will collect data relating to park use.

“This is a project where adults and youth work together in a way that is fun and meaningful for the entire City of Kingston,” Wilson explained. “If you like working with others (and like doing work outdoors) and want to contribute to making Kingston a safer and healthier place to live, then you should consider applying.”

To apply for a volunteer position, email aaz25@cornell.edu for an application. For more information about the project, contact Kristen Wilson by calling 845-340-3990 or emailing her at kew67@cornell.edu.

For more information about CCEUC’s community programs and events call 845-340-3990 or visit us online at www.cceulster.org or follow us on www.facebook.com

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