

# Learn it. Do it. Live it!

## CROSSING GUARD APPRECIATION DAY



Crossing guards help students cross the street safely throughout the year in all weather conditions. See how your school and community can recognize their hard work by participating in Crossing Guard Appreciation Day, one of Virginia's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) statewide events.

### What is Crossing Guard Appreciation Day?

- ✓ Crossing Guard Appreciation Day is a statewide event devoted to saying thank you to those who help students cross the street safely on their way to and from school.
- ✓ The Virginia SRTS program have designated the second Wednesday in February as Crossing Guard Appreciation Day. We encourage your school and community to use this day to show your appreciation for the women and men who help make safe routes to school a reality. If the second Wednesday doesn't work, we encourage you to celebrate Crossing Guard Appreciation Day any day in February.



Students at Armstrong Elementary in Herndon celebrate their crossing guard, Phyllis Krapf, in 2015.

### Who is a Crossing Guard?

- ✓ Crossing guards are any adults who are trained to provide assistance to students crossing the street on their routes to and from school. Crossing guards can be police officers, teachers, school staff, or volunteers.

### How to Participate?

- ✓ Whether simple or elaborate, Crossing Guard Appreciation Day events are a great way to acknowledge the value your crossing guards bring to safe travel to school.
- ✓ Event ideas here include ways to say thank you in person, promote the work of your crossing guard, and ways to support their work. Most important is offering a heart-felt thank you.
- ✓ Flyers, templates, banners, and other downloads can be found at [www.virginiadot.org/saferoutes](http://www.virginiadot.org/saferoutes).

### Event Ideas

#### Say Thank You, in person!

- ✓ Students should be encouraged to walk or bike (bundled up appropriately!) and thank their crossing guard in-person.
- ✓ Students can make thank you cards in class to give to the crossing guard on their way home. This can be part of an art class, or social studies class, or another class.
- ✓ Students, families, and other community members can host a meet and greet with coffee, hot chocolate, and some 'comfort food' after the morning shift on a cold February morning.
- ✓ Teachers can help students write songs, cheers, or poems thanking the crossing guard for their help. Students can deliver their message during school dismissal.
- ✓ Principals can write official letters of appreciation and deliver them during the afternoon dismissal.
- ✓ Schools can think up new ideas of their own! The sky is the limit!





In Woodbridge, Kerrydale Elementary's two crossing guards serve as role models for the 2020 student safety patrol and the rest of the Kerrydale community.

## Promote their work

- ✓ Contact local media sources to highlight your crossing guard for a personal interest story. Use the press release template at [www.virginiadot.org/saferoutes](http://www.virginiadot.org/saferoutes) to alert the local media of the event.
- ✓ Make a video of your crossing guard at work to post on your school website, share with media, or use to help promote your school's SRTS program.

## Support their work

- ✓ Schools can apply for a [QuickStart Mini-grant](#) to upgrade crossing guard equipment such as stop paddles, reflective vests, flashlights, etc.
- ✓ Parents and caregivers, always obey your crossing guard when you are driving. Adults can demonstrate to students the importance of following the crossing guard's directions when walking, biking, or driving.

Still have questions? Contact our Local Technical Assistance Coordinators at 1-855-601-7787 or email us at [info@virginiasrts.org](mailto:info@virginiasrts.org).



Ready-to-use materials, such as Thank You cards and graphics, are available for download on the Virginia SRTS website.

## Teaching Opportunity

While the focus of Crossing Guard Appreciation Day is on crossing guards and the work that they do, it can also be a good time to remind students how to cross streets safely, especially when crossing guards are present.

### Important Messages for Students

- It's always better to cross the street with the help of an adult or older sibling.
- Wait at least 3 steps away from the edge of the sidewalk or curb.
- Stay on the sidewalk until the crossing guard gives the signal that it is safe to cross.
- Always look left-right-left, as well as behind and then watch the crossing guard to see if it is safe to cross.
- Always cross in front of the crossing guard.
- Only walk in the marked crosswalk when crossing the street. If there is no marked crosswalk, walk directly in front of the crossing guard and make a straight line to the other side of the street.
- Obey crossing guards at all times. The crossing guard may see a something that you cannot.
- Remember to thank your crossing guards for the work that they do every day. A simple "thanks for your help today" can go a long way towards showing crossing guards that they are valued members of the community.

