

contacts:

Sarah Newsum, 971-302-8012;

sarahn@btaoregon.org

LeeAnne Ferguson, 646-345-9214;

leeanne@btaoregon.org

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Multicultural Families Call for Safer Streets in East Multnomah County
Communities spoke up in seven languages for health and safety of their kids

MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OR—On November 10th, the Community Alliance of Tenants and the For Every Kid Coalition brought neighbors, tenants, and local leaders together to tackle the issues their kids face around health and safety. Multicultural community members and elected officials from **East Portland, Gresham, Fairview, and Troutdale** discussed concerns around the disproportionately worse street-level safety and community health in their neighborhoods.



Gresham City Councilor, Mario Palmero, was in attendance to hear concerns from the community, and was supportive of safer routes to school.

“We have a right for kids to walk to school and be safe walking to school, at school, and going home from school,” said Councilor Palermo. “It needs to be safe for kids to go on their own. Not everyone has the luxury of the time to be able to take their kids to school.”

East Multnomah County parents and community members worked with Councilor Palmero and other local leaders to improve safe routes for walking, biking and transit. They identified that too many families in East Multnomah County don’t have the necessary safe infrastructure—sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes—in their communities to support healthy activity for their families. Parents are concerned that kids who most need opportunities for physical activity often don’t have safe routes to walk or bike to school, which could give them 66% of their recommended daily exercise.

Cristina Palacios, a mother of two, is very passionate about the health and safety of her children.

“I have lived in Fairview for eight years and never in those eight years have I been able to walk or bike to school with my kids because it’s not safe,” said Palacios. “I invite you to check out Fairview, Gresham, Troutdale to see what it’s like there. Here we have dangerous streets where it’s not safe for our kids to walk or bike by themselves. Our kids need exercise and they could be healthier if they walked or biked to school. We want the same things for our community as for downtown Portland. We want our kids to be able to walk and bike to school.”

The Metro area’s multicultural families face disproportionate health and safety concerns for their children, but struggle to advocate for their children’s needs due to language barriers. Last night Cristina Palacios worked with other parents and local leaders like Maria Talavera to find solutions utilizing translators speaking seven languages.

“I know that they will hear us because we are all here together, asking for what we need. That’s what it takes to make a change and be heard. 139th and Division need street lights. We need specific funding for Safe Routes to School so we can take our kids biking and walking to school. Somos pocos pero somos la diferencia (We are few but we are the difference).”

The For Every Kid Coalition is working to make Safe Routes to School for every kid in the Metro-area. Magnifying the voices of parents in East Multnomah County is one way they are making their case that funding is needed to make safe routes to school for every kid.

“CAT joined the For Every Kid Coalition because our tenant groups are experiencing unsafe streets around their apartments and schools,” said Cristina Palacios, Safe Housing Project Manager at the Community Alliance of Tenants. “They are worried for the safety of their kids. Parents need affordable housing *and* safe routes to school. These issues are linked. As residents move to find affordable housing, they often also find

contacts:

Sarah Newsum, 971-302-8012;

sarahn@btaoregon.org

LeeAnne Ferguson, 646-345-9214;

leeanne@btaoregon.org

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

that the streets are more unsafe and the health and safety of their kids becomes a bigger problem.”

Parents ended the event Tuesday night by drawing or writing about their most pressing safety concerns and hand delivering them to the attending local leaders. Their hope is to make the community safe for their kids and neighbors and for every kid to have the chance at a safe and healthy childhood.

Formed in 1996, the **Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT)** is Oregon’s only statewide, grassroots, tenant-controlled, tenant-rights organization. CAT educates, organizes and develops the leadership of low-income tenants.

For Every Kid is a growing coalition of the following organizations supporting safe routes to school for every kid in the Metro-area: Community Cycling Center, Community Alliance of Tenants, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon; Safe Routes to School National Partnership; American Heart Association; Oregon Walks; OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon; the Bicycle Transportation Alliance; and over 50 more organizations.

Photos from the event taken by BTA’s Communications Manager, Sarah Newsum:



Gresham City Councilor, Mario Palmero, speaking.



Reynolds School Board Member, Diego Hernandez, speaking.

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

contacts:

Sarah Newsum, 971-302-8012;
sarahn@btaoregon.org
LeeAnne Ferguson, 646-345-9214;
leeanne@btaoregon.org



Karen speaking group discussing concerns with Bicycle Transportation Alliance's East Portland Advocate, Elizabeth Quiroz.



Cristina Palacios, Staff Housing Project Coordinator for the Community Alliance of Tenants, testifying.