

Hopkins Hill students walk to school



Lauren Knight-Daily Times

Aidan Tomasso, 9, Alex Quinlan, 9, Nick Daugeluite, 9, Dylan Lantagne, 9, Samantha Lantagne, 8, and Emma Lemoi, 8, lead the group as students participate in Walk to School Day on Thursday morning.

School participates in international event for the fourteenth year

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COVENTRY—Kids at Hopkins Hill Elementary School passed up the opportunity to ride the bus or jump in the car for a lift to school Thursday morning. Instead, they walked.

Hopkins Hill participated in the global event that encourages physical activity in youth as well as raising awareness for a walk-able community. International Walk to School Day is an event that began in Great Britain and now occurs in 40 countries.

This year's event took place on Wednesday morning, Oct. 5, but due to NECAP testing, Hopkins Hill chose to reschedule it to Thursday.

According to Diane L. Kowal, the school nurse, the event is targeted to promote physical fitness and health but also help

create safer routes to schools.

"It encourages kids to walk, and with the problems in this day and age, for people to watch out for each others' kids," said Kowal.

There were two meeting places at both ends of Johnson Boulevard where students either walked to or where dropped off by their parents. At 8:35 a.m., the group headed off to school with the guidance of parents and staff.

"We try to involve some community safety members as well," said Kowal of the members of the Coventry police department and Hopkins Hill fire department who helped escort the kids to the school.

Approximately 200 students participated in this year's event, according to Kowal. Of the group, there were both walkers and bikers.

The kids enjoy the morning activity, said Kowal. "They get

stickers that say they participate and it's something they are proud of."

According to event's website, the purpose of the event is to encourage physical activity, but also raise awareness regarding safe routes through the community, raise concern for the environment and reduce traffic congestion, pollution and speeding near schools. Additionally, the event is targeted to promote stronger connections within the community leaders, parents and children.

Kowal stated that a meeting was held two years ago at the State House on possible grant funding that would develop more sidewalks to schools in the immediate area.

"We were aware of it but didn't quite qualify the last time," she said. "It is something we are looking into in the future."