

# THE HISTORY OF PCI'S WALKING SCHOOL BUS

Brought to you by:  
Family Service of Rhode Island



**PCI**  
Providence Children's Initiative



## Providence Children's Initiative

- Community based initiative that focuses its services within South Providence.
- Our aim is to facilitate partnerships to increase access to educational, economic, and social opportunities from cradle to career.
- Currently Providence Children's Initiative is home to the following programs:
  - The Walking School Bus
  - Asthma program
  - South Providence Community Action Team
  - Community Development

# OUR WORK WITH ATTENDANCE

- ◉ During the 2011-2012 year PCI focused a lot on chronic absenteeism within the Providence Elementary Schools
- ◉ We tracked the attendance of the chronically absent students at Fogarty Elementary School
- ◉ We would call home to find out what barriers the families were facing in getting their child to school
- ◉ This led us to piloting the Walking School Bus....

# GOALS FOR THE PILOT PROGRAM

- ◉ To improve attendance of the chronically absent students in Fogarty Elementary School
- ◉ Expand to other schools
- ◉ Make this program apart of all the PPSD Elementary Schools.
- ◉ Create sustainable relationships with the families and community involved in our program

# 2012

- ◉ The program started at Fogarty Elementary School on the first day of school in 2012
- ◉ We started with 6 kids on the “Green Line”
- ◉ By the end of the year (2013) we had grown to 3 separate routes and 22 kids....with a waitlist!

2012





# 2013

- By September of 2013 we expanded our program to Bailey.
  - Our program by the end of the year had about 40 students between the two schools(with a waitlist)
  - Our routes were:
    - Green Line
    - Blue Line
    - Purple Line
    - Orange Line - BAILEY
- FOGARTY

# 2014- SUMMER PROGRAM

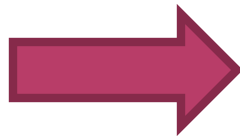
- ◉ We created a WSB summer program to help raise awareness about the City's Summer Meals Program.
- ◉ We walked the kids to the park so they got a free lunch and they got time to play... on Fridays they got to go to the Center for Dynamic Learning for educational activities.
- ◉ The response was not as consistent as the school year (understandable). If we get some volunteers we'd love to do it in 2015





# 2014

- Our program is now at the following schools:
  - Fogarty
  - Bailey
  - Young Woods
  - Alfred Lima



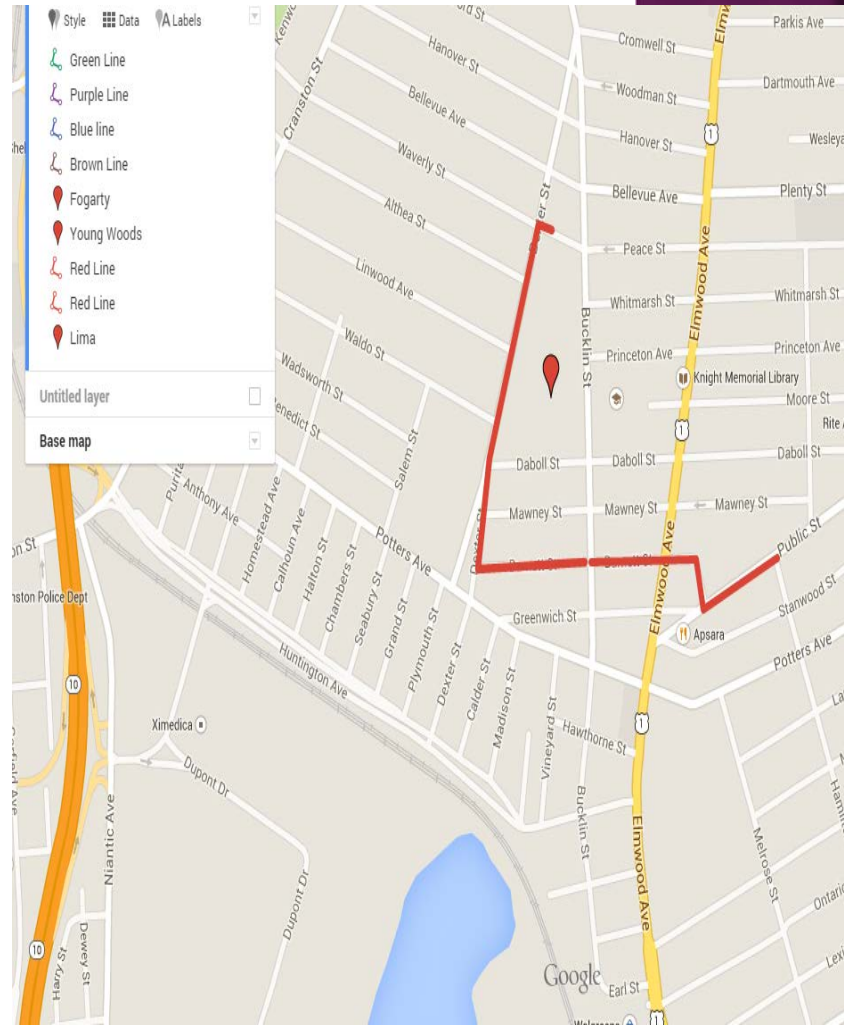
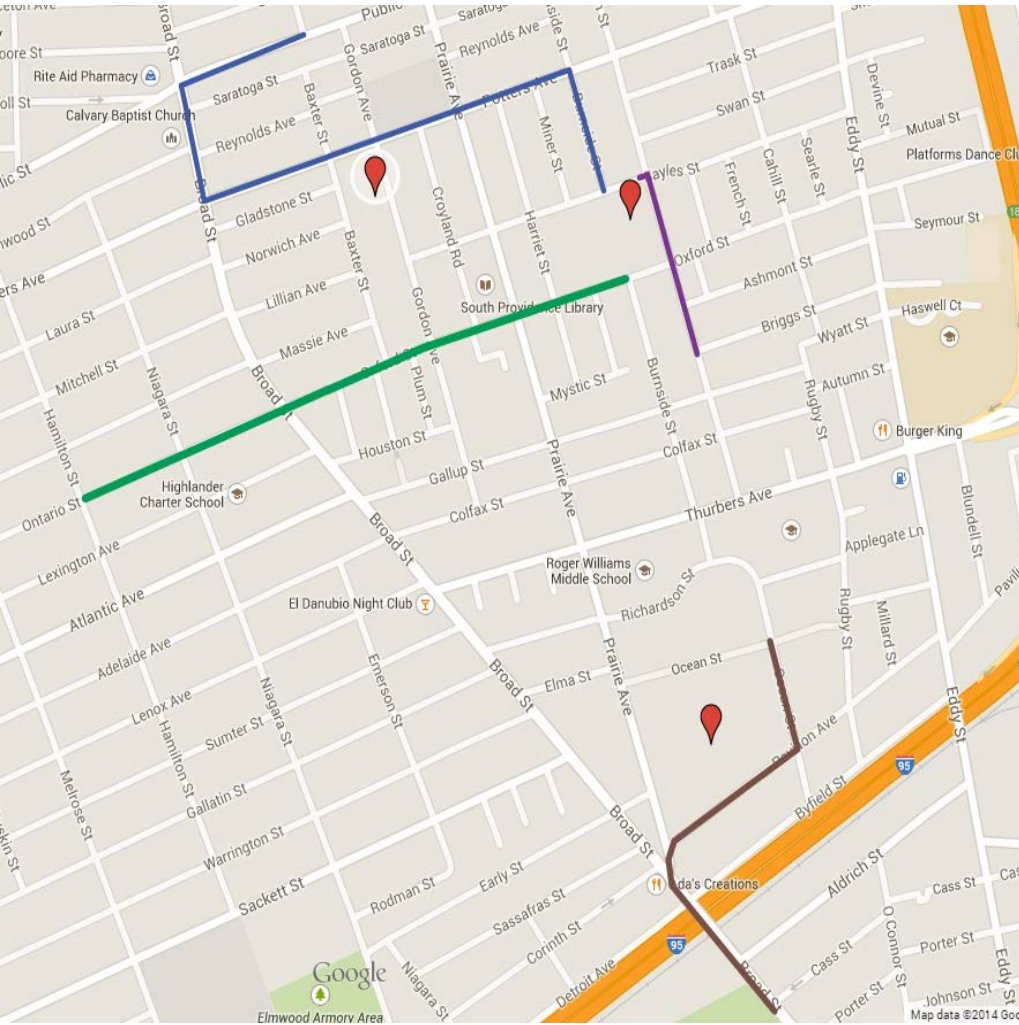
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# 2014

- We have about 50 kids ... we could have at least 50 kids at each school.
- 5 routes
- And a waitlist at every school!
  - We have a waitlist because we do not have enough volunteers



# CURRENT ROUTES



# HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

- ◉ Our program is volunteer based. We recruit volunteers to help walk the students to and sometimes from school.
- ◉ All volunteers receive Background Checks.
- ◉ We schedule volunteers every week, each on a certain route.
- ◉ We also create a relationships with the schools and we get referrals of the students who are absent and we then contact the family to enroll them in the program



# VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

- We try everything we can think of to recruit volunteers

- Word of mouth
- Social media
- Flyers
- Community events

## Motivation:

- We advertise our “Volunteer of the Month” in our email blasts.
- We have “Super Volunteers” who receive stipends.



# SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL GRANT

- Provides funding for our Walking School Bus program → Received funding in January 2014
  - Non-infrastructure funding
  - Program Supplies
  - 2 positions
  - Promotional Materials

**SafeRoutes**  
National Center for Safe Routes to School





# PROGRAM COLLABORATION



Audubon Society  
of Rhode Island



25 YEARS  
BUILDING OLNEYVILLE



RHODE ISLAND  
FOUNDATION



PROVIDENCE  
Children's  
museum



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway  
Administration



Providence  
Schools



# HAVE WE MET OUR GOALS?

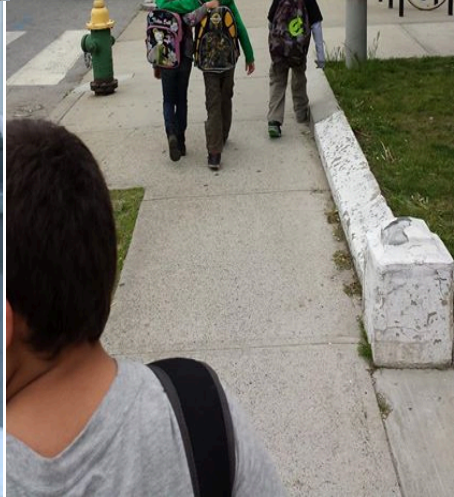
- ◉ Our first year 79% of the students enrolled in our program had improved attendance.
- ◉ We have not done a program evaluation for our second year running the program...soon!
- ◉ The families love it and respect it. We have built long-lasting relationships. Especially with the families whose children have been in the program for all three years.

# THANK YOU

- ◉ Thank you for everyone who has helped make this program a success and those who are constantly thinking of new ways we can address the issues of Pedestrian and Road Safety for the communities we work in.
- ◉ We at PCI look forward to this partnership.









# THE END!

- To keep up with our Walking School Bus follow us on Facebook!
- [Http://www.facebook.com/PCIWalkingSchool Bus](http://www.facebook.com/PCIWalkingSchoolBus)