



Community Action and Fundraising in Portland, OR



Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center

Problem

A Portland neighborhood needed safer pedestrian facilities following a tragic incident.

Background

A determined community member in Portland, Oregon, took the lead promoting pedestrian safety after a local resident was killed crossing a street at night in the rain. As the new co-chair of the transportation committee for her all-volunteer neighborhood association, she had the idea to create bright florescent yellow umbrellas marked with pedestrian crossing symbols and two transparent sections to look through. With this innovative tool, pedestrians could stay dry in the rainy climate and act as their own moving pedestrian crossing sign at the same time.



The design of the umbrella.

Solution

She contacted the owner of a local umbrella company who was eager to work with her and agreed to put the new product in their catalog. She submitted grants to two main sources of funding: the City’s Office of Neighborhood Involvement, which makes money available to neighborhood associations, and a local grant program set up to offset the inconvenience caused by a nearby waste transfer station.

In addition, she contacted the city council with specific requests: the installation of painted crosswalks at every intersection in the neighborhood, a center line “Stop for Pedestrians” sign, and traffic calming signs. The Portland Department of Transportation (PDOT) granted the requests and the city created pedestrian crosswalk criteria based on peak pedestrian traffic as well. The city also performed an active crosswalk enforcement action to deter crosswalk violations.

One of the greatest challenges of community-based advocacy work is finding other volunteers willing to commit their time to a project. In this case, the neighborhood association maintained a sizable regular attendance by actively inviting affected parties and talking about topics of immediate interest to residents. When an issue extended beyond their neighborhood, the group put invitations in the mailboxes of other affected residents. Contact within the group was maintained with the help of an email newsletter.

Results

The PDOT continues to work with community members and neighborhood organizations to put on safety fairs, where the umbrellas are sold at a reduced cost. The PDOT also purchases umbrellas to distribute to older pedestrians at partnered senior centers and food distribution centers.

Contact

http://portlandtransport.com/archives/2007/02/proactive_pedes.html

Image Source:

Portland Transport. http://portlandtransport.com/archives/2007/02/proactive_pedes.html

