



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Operation Best Foot Forward Expands Enforcement into New Counties to Promote Safety for Students and Crossing Guards Near Schools**

**ORLANDO, FLA. – February 6, 2023** – In recognition of Crossing Guard Appreciation Day on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Best Foot Forward for Pedestrian Safety program will be kicking off its quarterly pedestrian safety enforcement, dubbed *Operation Best Foot Forward*, to bring awareness and education to drivers to keep students and crossing guards safe near school zones where they walk.

During Operation Best Foot Forward, plainclothes officers and deputies will cross streets at marked crosswalks, giving drivers enough time to slow down and stop safely. Drivers who do not stop as Florida law requires will be pulled over and face a minimum \$164 citation and three (3) points on their driver’s license. Most crosswalks chosen for enforcement are within one mile of a school where students walk.

Law enforcement agencies will be conducting this two-week high-visibility crosswalk enforcement starting Tuesday, February 6 through Friday, February 16. In addition to Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties, the operation will expand for the first time into Brevard, Volusia, and Marion Counties as part of FDOT’s Target Zero initiative to reduce traffic-related serious injuries and deaths to zero.

According to data collected by the Best Foot Forward program last year, drivers in Central Florida are only yielding to pedestrians in school zones 43% of the time. Additionally, the [American Academy of Pediatrics released a report](#) in July that said that “child pedestrian mortality rates have shown an increase of 11% since 2013, driven by increases among 10- to 14-year-olds and 15- to 19-year-olds.”

Operation Best Foot Forward is part of the Best Foot Forward coalition’s larger effort to improve road safety. Studies show that driver behavior changes when you combine these enforcement strategies, education, and engineering over a sustained period. Crosswalk locations include:

<b><u>Crosswalk Location</u></b>	<b><u>Enforcement Agency</u></b>	<b><u>Nearby School</u></b>
W. Oak Street & N. Emory Ave.	Kissimmee Police Department	Thacker Elementary
N. Dean Rd. & Timber Oaks Ct.	Orange County Sheriff’s Office	Union Park Middle
Dowden Rd. & Story Time Dr.	Orlando Police Department	Innovation Middle
Bear Lake Rd. & McNeil Rd.	Seminole County Sheriff’s Office	Teague Middle
Park Ave. & Tanglewilde St.	Apopka Police Department	Dream Lake Elementary
SE 28 <sup>th</sup> St. & SE 52 <sup>nd</sup> Ave.	Marion County Sheriff’s Office	Maplewood Elementary School
Stadium Pkwy. midblock south of Judge Fran Jamieson Way	Brevard County Sheriff’s Office	Viera Charter School

For a complete schedule of the intersection locations including time and day as well as an interactive map, visit: <https://www.iyield4peds.org/operationbff/>

### **About the Best Foot Forward for Pedestrian Safety Program**

The Best Foot Forward for Pedestrian Safety (BFF) program is administered by the local non-profit Bike/Walk Central Florida (BWCF). BFF was created to reverse the conflict between pedestrians and drivers by focusing on one specific behavior change – getting more drivers to yield for pedestrians at marked crosswalks as Florida law requires. More than a campaign, Best Foot Forward is a behavior change-based program designed to improve road safety through consistent and persistent education, high-visibility crosswalk enforcement, and low-cost engineering countermeasures at marked crosswalks. Best Foot Forward operates in six Central Florida counties and is the largest pedestrian-focused grassroots coalition in the nation, working with more than 40 local and regional partners. Since launching in 2012, the percentage of drivers yielding to people in marked crosswalks has increased from 17% to more than 50% on roads with a speed limit of 35 mph and lower and 2% to 45% on roads 40 mph and higher. To learn more, visit [iyield4peds.org](http://iyield4peds.org).

### **About Bike/Walk Central Florida:**

Bike Walk Central Florida (BWCF) is a regional advocacy organization for bicyclists and pedestrians. Since 2010, the organization has worked on behalf of local pedestrians and bicyclists to advocate for safe and convenient places for people to bike and walk, regardless of where they live or where they need to go. Focusing on their four pillars of policy, perception, practice, and sustainability, BWCF works tirelessly to advocate for policies, programs and infrastructure that is fair and accessible to all.

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