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## Acalanes Valley and Ridge Neighborhood Closes in on Goal

By Jean Follmer



Acalanes Valley and Ridge  
[www.acalanesvalley.com](http://www.acalanesvalley.com)

Oliver Rotundo completes the walk-a-thon Photo provided by Lynda Rotundo

In 1969, 87% of all children who lived within one mile of their school either walked or biked to school. "Today, 60% of children that live within a mile are driven and 20% take the bus," said Acalanes Valley resident Lynda Rotundo. "An impacting factor (in the change) is the concern for safety," she added. Championed by Rotundo, the Acalanes Valley and Ridge Neighborhood Association has taken safety into its own hands.

The neighborhood, located behind Acalanes High School, boasts beautiful views and a resulting steep terrain. Rotundo realized the need for more safety within the neighborhood about five years ago. She said it was an incident that involved a new driver and the death of a dog that caught her attention.

The young driver saw some girls playing basketball in the street and was able to avoid them. However, some other kids were walking their dog off leash in the street, the dog ran in front of the car and the driver was unable to stop in time.

Rotundo said it's not uncommon for people to walk in the street in the neighborhood because there aren't adequate sidewalks or pedestrian lanes. "I realized something had to be done to keep these kids safe. I realized we needed to get this going so I started a petition to get folks to slow down," said Rotundo. There is repeated speeding and reckless driving within the neighborhood. In response to a fatal car accident last winter, "residents of Acalanes Valley and Ridge approved a ballot measure to make neighborhood streets safer for our children and all pedestrians."

The Acalanes Valley and Ridge neighborhood is comprised of approximately 300 homes and many of the residents have school-age children. Stanley Boulevard serves as the neighborhood's main artery into the neighborhood so the resulting traffic can be quite busy, especially at peak times.

The neighborhood wants to make its streets more pedestrian-friendly and "make it safer for children to walk or bike to school, activities and friends' houses." While the City of Lafayette has agreed to contribute \$70,000 to the project, Acalanes Valley and Ridge residents are responsible for raising an additional \$30,000. The full \$30,000 needs to be raised by December 31, 2008 or the City will move on to the next neighborhood that needs help. As it stands, the neighborhood is within \$5,000 of its goal.

Funds have been raised in many ways, including neighbor-to-neighbor campaigns, donations from local businesses, a "buy-a-brick" donation program and kid-powered lemonade stands. The Springhill Student Council has also decided to donate the proceeds from its first Pay it Forward fundraiser to the effort.

The City of Lafayette established its Traffic Calming Program in September, 2002, and has helped other neighborhoods within the community.

The Acalanes Valley effort is a three-pronged approach: Traffic Calming Project, Sidewalk Project and Warner Court Curve Project. The Traffic Calming portion includes obeying the speed limit and stopping for stop signs and pedestrian occupied crosswalks.

The Sidewalk Project seeks to provide a pedestrian-friendly walkway that will eliminate the need for cars, cyclists and pedestrians to share the same path and the Warner Court Curve Project will improve the dangerous portion of Stanley Boulevard near Warner Court. Rotundo hopes the improvements will enable parents to feel like "it's OK to let kids get outdoors and knock on their neighbors' door and ask them to play. A lot of people have resigned themselves that that was yesteryear."

If the neighborhood is successful in reaching its goals, construction is slated to begin next summer. For more information or to make a donation, please visit [www.acalanesvalley.com](http://www.acalanesvalley.com).

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