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GreenCorps member Kate Saddison '11 strives to improve safety and encourage walking and biking in Morris

Summary: The White Pigeon, Michigan, native develops Safe Routes To School and works on Morris BikeShare sustainability.

(April 26, 2011)-Spring is officially upon us, and what better way to celebrate it than to spend time outside. University of Minnesota, Morris GreenCorps member Kate Saddison '11, White Pigeon, Michigan, is encouraging people to prioritize spending time outside through her two main GreenCorps projects: supporting Safe Routes To School (SRTS) and making the Morris BikeShare more sustainable.

Safe Routes To School is a nationwide program run by the Minnesota Department of Transportation. It promotes, just as the name suggests, safer routes for kids to walk or bike to school. The focus is on K–6 graders, and funding is provided to schools in a refund system. The safer the city makes the routes, the more money the schools receive. Currently, Columbia Avenue, the street in front of Morris Area Public Elementary School, is a high traffic area of the city. Local officials have been working to improve the situation. Saddison is collaborating with Jim Beauregard '88, Morris chief of police and Blaine Hill '87, Morris city manager, to address this situation. They are also investigating the possible benefits of a dedicated bike lane in Morris, which would benefit students at the college and local schools.

Saddison is also working to improve the Morris BikeShare, or the Golden Bike Program, and make it more sustainable. The Morris BikeShare was the 2010 senior legacy project. When the bikes are out in the spring and fall, Morris students can check them out with their U-Card at the Student Center Information Desk. The bikes are gold in color making them more identifiable. Saddison is working with Erin Christensen'05, program associate in Alumni Relations and Annual Giving, who helped seniors set up the program last year. Saddison hopes to ensure that the bikes are around for years to come.

The common link between the two projects is increasing personal fitness and reducing CO2 emissions, two things in which Saddison is very invested in. She loves spending time outside and says, “When you’re in your car, you miss a lot of what’s going on.” She adds that half the population isn’t getting 30 minutes a day of exercise, highly lamentable when even something as simple as gardening counts. She’s hoping that these two projects will help develop personal behavior changes among the people of Morris, encouraging them to get on their feet and out of their cars.

The [Minnesota GreenCorps](#) is an environmentally focused AmeriCorps program administered by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). This program is funded through a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service with additional support from ServeMinnesota. Partnering in this program is University of Minnesota, Morris Center for Small Towns.

The [Center for Small Towns](#) is a community outreach program housed at the Morris campus that serves as a point-of-entry to University of Minnesota resources. Small towns, local units of government, K–12 schools, nonprofit organizations, and other University units are able to utilize the Center’s resources as they work on rural issues or make contributions to rural society. Their mission is to focus the University’s attention and marshal its resources toward

assisting Minnesota's small towns with locally identified issues by creating applied learning opportunities for faculty and students.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.