

Traffic Tamers Story:

Building a mass movement

Initially I wrote these stories as part of the process of inventing the Traffic Tamers program. But then the team working on the project said, 'Hell, why don't we let other people add their bit of creative genius to these stories. That could help us build an even more innovative program.' So here is your chance to be part of putting the finishing touches to a program that will trigger a major revolution in our cities: an outbreak of civility that will make driving fast antisocial (and put an end to trivial liability suites).

If you have feedback we would love to hear it. Please send your comments to david@lesstraffic.com. We want to hear about the things you don't think will work and your ideas for improving the program or promoting the program. We are also looking for people willing to help us kick-start Traffic Tamers in 2005.

What is Traffic Tamers?

Traffic Tamers enables children, parents, residents, city officials and health professionals to work together in making streets safer and more livable for kids, the elderly and residents. Traffic Tamers is a 'self help' program that can be implemented as a stand-alone program or as a supplement to existing programs (city, non-profit, or state/federal governments). The goals of Traffic Tamers are to:

- Trigger a world-wide social revolution in which speeding or driving a car more than necessary is considered just as antisocial as blowing smoke in someone's face.
- Give children and residents cost-free or low-cost tools for slowing traffic around schools and in neighborhood streets.
- Give cities a very low-cost program for getting residents to accept responsibility for their part in traffic problems. This program can be integrated with existing Traffic Calming or Safe Routes to School programs or can be used as a stand-alone program.
- Give cities a very low-cost tool for addressing school traffic issues and for encouraging children to walk to school and other destinations in their neighborhood.
- Give cities new design tools for taming traffic that are cheaper and more effective than traditional traffic calming.

Sarah's story

Sarah Yabanka was five when she moved to Timboona with her mother, father and elder brother George. Her dad had been promoted to regional manager for a large parcel delivery service. Six months after arriving in Timboona, Sarah's mom got a job as a radiographer at the hospital. The Yabanka household was an extremely busy household. Every morning at 6.10 a.m. Mrs. Yabanka would wake the children. Breakfast was at 6.45. Mr. Yabanka took the red sports utility to work at 7.15. At 7.28 Mrs. Yabanka would herd Sarah and George into the silver four wheel drive, and psychologically prepare to do battle with the 350 other parents trying to drive their kids to school.

It was one week after Sarah's ninth birthday that she got an email from her cousin Samatha who lived interstate. It read:

Dear Sarah,

I have just joined Traffic Tamers, a club for kids started by two misfit dogs from Australia.

It's really cool because the misfit dogs give you Magic Stars every time you do something that helps to make streets safer for kids. Will you have a little competition with me to see who can earn the most magic stars?

You also get to create you own misfit dog. Mine is called, Bonzo. To meet Bonzo [click here](#) and he will give you a personal tour of the Traffic Tamers web site!

Bonzo will also tell you how you can join Traffic Tamers so we can start our competition.

Your cousin Samantha

PS I have dropped out of ballet classes. I still want to be a dancer, just not a ballet dancer.

Sarah clicked on the link, and was immediately welcomed by Bonzo who took Sarah on a tour of the web site which included meeting Red, Fleet and the Traffic Taming Wizard. At the end of the tour, Bonzo asked Sarah if she would like to join Traffic Tamers and accept Samantha's challenge. Sarah clicked yes.

Bonzo explained that to join the club Sarah needed to first create her own misfit dog who would work with all the other misfit dogs in running Traffic Tamers. Sarah

created her dog from a wide selection of body parts and called her dog Miracle. There was a little party on her screen as Red, Fleet, the Wizard and a million dogs welcomed Miracle to the inner circle.

Miracle explained how Sarah could earn Magic Stars:

- Complete Traffic Tamers School of Magic **1 Star**
- 5 walks to school **1 Star**
- Get another child to join Traffic Tamers **1 Star**
- Sign up a Pace Car and put that year's symbol on it **1 Star**
- Sponsor an adult who then completes a Certificate in Traffic Taming **1 Star**
- Get the adult you sponsor to sponsor other adults
 - If they complete Certificate **1 Star**
 - If they turn their car into a Pace Car **1 Star**
- Get an adult to complete the Diploma in Traffic Taming **1 Star**



- Whole class does the Class Challenge **1 Star**
- Class or child sponsors a Traffic Tamer Street Party **1 Star**
- Make a *Rest Your Dragon Wagon Fridge Organizer*. **1 Star**

When Sarah earned 10 Magic Stars she would get a Bronze Magic Star and this would entitle her to create her very own downloadable Trading Card. 5 Bronze Stars would earn her a Silver Star. And 5 Silver Stars would earn a Gold Star. And 5 Gold Stars would earn a Platinum Star.

Sarah decided to earn her first star straight away by graduating from the Traffic Tamer School of Magic. This involved mastering the 3 magic ways to tame dragon wagon. Sarah loved the three magic ways – rest your dragon wagon, calm your dragon wagon and intrigue dragon wagons.

Miracle then asked if she would like to download her own Traffic Tamer License and Business Cards.

Sarah printed her Certificate and three pages of business cards. These both automatically inserted her name and the picture of her misfit dog.

Next Sarah printed out a document explaining the program to her parents. This document was personalized, featuring both Miracle and Sarah's name. It asked the parents to:

- ❑ Let Sarah walk to school, at least for the last 10 minutes of the journey. The document explained that if Sarah walked everyday for the first week, she would get triple points – 3 Magic Stars instead of one.
- ❑ Visit the Traffic Tamers web site and do the Certificate in Traffic Taming (they would need to enter 'Miracle' as a password so Sarah would be automatically credited with one star.) Alternatively they could authorize Sarah to download a training manual for them.
- ❑ Turn their car into a Pace Car (registering the Pace Car would ensure Sarah earned another Magic Star).

Miracle also asked if Sarah wanted to make a 3D Tamed Dragon Wagon to go in the back of their car. (The Tamed Dragon Wagon was a symbol that a car was a Pace Car, which meant that even in cities where people could not get access to Pace Car stickers, residents could still badge their car as a Pace Car.) She printed this out as well.

Miracle suggested the easiest way for Sarah to get points (besides walking every day for the first week) was to get her friends to join up. She could send them an email or give them her business card. She only had the email address for two of her friends so she decided to send them an email. All she had to do was enter their name, email address and she had the option of putting a message at the bottom.



Having sent the emails, Sarah wanted to stick her Certificate up on the wall, cut and create her business cards, and cut and fold her Tamed Dragon Wagon. Having done this she scampered off to show her mother what she had created.

At first Mrs Yabanka was not very keen about Sarah walking to school, not even for the last ten minutes. But after Sarah told her that she had accepted a challenge from Samantha, and that just by going to the web site and completing the Certificate in Traffic Taming she would earn Sarah her first Magic Star, her mum agreed to look at the web site.

On arriving at the Traffic Tamers web site, she put the name of Sarah's misfit dog in the Visitors log in box. Miracle welcomed her to Traffic Tamers and thanked her for being committed to helping make street safer for kids. Miracle asked her to click one of the following so he could personalize her introductory tour:

- parent whose child has joined Traffic Tamers
- parent concerned about traffic safety around my child's school or in our home street
- resident who would like the traffic to go slower in my street
- teacher wanting to help make streets safer for kids
- health professional concerned about childhood obesity
- city official looking for lateral traffic solutions.

Mrs. Yabanka clicked the first option and was introduced to the program by Miracle. At the end of the tour, Miracle explained:

Kids look at getting to and from school very differently than adults.

For adults, it is a transport task – get the kids from A to B as efficiently as possible.

But for kids, walking to and from school has nothing to do with transport.

Making streets safer for kids requires seeing the issue through kids eyes.

Think about what you valued most when you walked to school. Click the child's picture that sums up best what you valued most:

- chance for an adventure
- spend some time with my friends
- observing and interacting with nature
- getting some fresh air and feeling energized for my classes
- feeling connected to my neighborhood, sense of belonging
- a sense of independence and mastery
- I didn't walk.

Mrs. Yabanka clicked "chance for an adventure" and got the following message:

I bet you had some great adventures. Did you know that having adventures when you walked to school was very beneficial to your development as a child? The adventures you had enriched your imagination; developed a sense of place; and built self-confidence. Our memories of childhood are woven from our adventures. The greater the adventures, the richer our memories.

But did you know there were a host of other benefits you got every time you walked to school?

Spend some time with friends: Walking gave you unstructured time with your friends which taught you very valuable socializing skills. You also saw a wider range of people in your community which helped you be a more compassionate and inclusive person.

Observe and interact with nature: While walking, you observed the minute details of your environment. This built a deep sensitivity to nature and a sense of attachment. Walking was therefore a very valuable part of your informal education... perhaps even more important than watching nature documentaries.

Getting some fresh air and feeling energized for classes: Walking helped you and your friends to be much healthier than today's children who are facing an obesity epidemic. But I bet you weren't aware that getting exercise before morning classes made you more relaxed and mentally alert which helped you learn better? And I bet you were not aware that what you observed on your walks was building a reservoir of memories and stimuli from which you could draw to be more creative?

Sense of feeling connected to the neighborhood, a sense of belonging: Every time you walked to school you were building your 'sense of place' — feeling connected to our physical environment and community. Walking and exploring was building a mental and emotional map of a your 'home territory' which becomes integrated into your sense of self. Unknown to you at the time, this was building your psychological well-being.

A sense of independence and mastery: As your parents gave you more and more freedom to walk to school, your sense of control, independence and confidence grew. Independent mobility was essential to your personal development and sense of mastery.

Putting aside for a moment any concerns you may have for safety, do you believe these benefits

[Are not important to my child](#)

[Are very important to my child](#)

Mrs. Yabanka clicked the second option and was asked if she would like to help kids make streets safer so her children could enjoy these benefits. She said yes and was asked for registration details. She then had to make her own misfit dog. (She was told that her misfit dog would be a constant reminder that she needed to continue seeing the issue through a child's eyes.) Mrs. Yabanaka called her dog Miracle Mother.

Mrs. Yabanka then decided to do the Certificate Course in Traffic Taming. The Traffic Taming Wizard, Red and Fleet showed her the 3 magic ways to Tame Dragon Wagons and what parents can do to make streets safer. [This Certificate course was tailor made for parents because Mrs. Yabanksa had a membership category of Adult Parent.] As part of the course, Mrs. Yabanka had to tick boxes or fill in blanks as to what she was going to do personally to help make streets safer for kids.

Under magic way number one, rest your Dragon Wagon, she ticked:

- Let children walk the last 10 minutes
- Try and organize a Walking Bus so they can walk all the way
- Her and Sarah would make a *Rest Your Dragon Wagon Fridge Organizer* so that she combined some of their trips

- She would walk to church rather than driving as a means of getting some exercise

Under magic way two, calm your Dragon Wagon, she ticked:

- Turn our cars into Pace Cars. ([See if your city](#) supports Traffic Tamers and has free Pace Car stickers available) [Sign up now](#) Note: your child sponsor will not be credited with Magic Star points till you complete the sign up.
- Plan to leave early and take 3 deep breaths before turning the key

Under magic way three, intrigue Dragon Wagons, she ticked:

- Not ready to try anything just yet

This completed her Certificate Course and she was asked if the child with misfit dog 'Miracle' was the only person that should share the magic star points. [If her son George had also been registered then Sarah and George would have both been credited with a Magic Star]. She printed out her own personalized certificate.

She then checked out some clever ways to help the kids in their campaign to make street safer:

- Tell my friends to visit Traffic Tamers. Every one of your friends that do this Certificate in Traffic Taming will earn your child one Magic Star.
- Give my friends and acquaintances copies of my child's business card. [Print cards](#).
- [See if mu city](#) is part of the network and what support they offer children and residents. If they are, [send message of thanks and support](#). If they are not, [email them now](#) and ask them to become part of the Traffic Tamers Cities Network which supports children in their campaign to make streets safer and more livable for everyone.
- Volunteer to be a Traffic Tamers Champ for your child's class or for the entire school. ([See if my school is already involved](#))
- Organize a Traffic Tamers Street Party so everyone in your street can learn how to slow traffic in your street and make your street safer and more livable for everyone.
- Do the Diploma in Traffic Taming so I can be even more effective in taming traffic across the entire city.

Mrs. Yabanka decided to send emails to seven friends. Mrs. Yabanka also checked to see if her city was listed in the Traffic Tamer Cities Network and discovered that they were not. On the page that reported that the city was not a member was a Google search box to search for the contact details of her city. It was suggested to her that she should contact the mayor, her local councilor, the city engineer, and the health department. She sent an email to the Mayor asking him to support Traffic Tamers.

It was at this point that Sarah came into the computer room having completed her homework. 'So am I allowed to walk?' Sarah asked excitedly. 'Yes, and I am more than happy to turn our two cars into Pace Cars. Should we download another Tamed Dragon Wagon?' Together they downloaded the cutout and printed it out. While it was printing, Mrs. Yabanka showed Sarah her certificate in Traffic Taming and informed her that later that week she would do the Diploma which would give Sarah another star.

Sarah's mum was about to sign out of the Traffic Tamers web site when Sarah spied the 'Random Adventure' button and asked her mum what it was. Her mum clicked on it and they got to read about the adventures that a child in New Zealand had while walking to school. 'Wow

Mum!’ said Sarah. ‘That’s on the other side of the world. I’m going to put my adventures on there so other people can read about them.’

‘Well dear, first you will need to have some adventures!’

Sarah went to bed very excited. Tomorrow would be her first walk to school – ever. She dreamed about what kind of adventures she might have.

The next day when Sarah got home from school, she couldn’t wait to register the fact that she had walked on the web site. Before logging onto Traffic Tamers she checked her emails and discovered that two of her friends had accepted the Traffic Tamers Challenge and that this had earned her two magic stars. She logged onto Traffic Tamers, entering her misfit dog’s name and password. A personalized home page came up.

Welcome back Sarah. You have earned 7 magic stars since you last visited.

She looked at her Star Tracker to see how she had earned her Magic Stars:

- Walks – 0 stars
- Course in Traffic Taming Magic -- 1 Star
- Adults you have sponsored– 2 Stars
- Pace Cars – 2 stars
- Friends accepting the Traffic Tamers Challenge – 2 Stars
- Adults completing Diploma in Traffic Taming – 0 stars
- Class accepting challenge – 0 stars
- Bonus stars – 0 stars
- TOTAL 7

Just 3 more magic stars and you will have earned a bronze magic star and be able to create your very own Trading Card.

Part of this Star Tracker was a Walking Log – a simple week long calendar showing the previous 7 days. Each day was divided into “To school” and “Home”. Immediately under the calendar was a graphic of five walking shoe = 1 Magic Star. Sarah clicked the ‘to school’ button for that day and a window popped up:

Congratulations Sarah. We are so proud of you. Please confirm that you walked at least the last 10 minutes to school this morning. We are relying on your honesty. [] Yes, I walked this morning

When she clicked ‘Yes’ the first walking feet symbol on the first line changed to full color. Wow! It was so cool to see her achievement.

Next Sarah decided to lodge a drawing of the adventure she had that morning walking to school. She also clicked the button “More ideas for how to earn Magic Stars”. She really liked the idea of handing out her Business Cards to the kids in her class. She also decided that she should give one to the people who lived next door, even though they didn’t have any kids.

Next Sarah looked at “Helping Miracle and the Misfit Dogs grow Traffic Tamers”. One idea was to check to see if her city was part of the Traffic Tamers Cities Network. If it was, it suggested she send them a hand-written note of thanks. If it wasn’t, then she could write to the Mayor. It also suggested writing to important people in the media. Sarah decided that because her city was not part of the network that she would write a letter to the Mayor.

The next day Sarah posted her letter to the Mayor, gave out her business cards to about half the kids in her class, walked both ways to school and visited the next door neighbors to give them her business card. When Sarah went to log in her two walks, she discovered that she now had a Bronze Magic Star! Another of her friends had accepted her challenge and two of the people her mother had sent the email too had completed the Certificate in Traffic Taming. Now she could download her very own Trading Card. The Trading Card had the name of her misfit dog, her current star status, the city she lived in and could either feature a story or a picture of an adventure that her misfit dog had while walking.

The next day at school, one of her friends, who had got the business card, told her that there was a boy in the grade above them that was into Traffic Tamers and that he had lots of Traffic Tamer Trading Cards. Sarah found him and he thought Sarah's trading card, even though it only had one Bronze Star, had a really cool drawing of Magic's adventure. He offered her a two bronze star card all the way from England! Sarah was over the moon.

Mrs. Yabanka returned to Traffic Tamers to do her Diploma in Traffic Taming. This involved a number of lessons built around the Traffic Tamers DVD. At the end of each lesson she was not only asked questions about the content, but also about actions that she was prepared to implement. She really loved the idea of having a Traffic Tamer Street Party and seeing if the street would be interested in working together to create a Traffic Tamer Adventure Trail down their street. She loved the idea of removing some of the high fences and creating activity nodes. She decided that she would raise the matter at dinner that night to see if the Yabanka household should set the example. But she also decided that she should send the Mayor a hand written note encouraging the city to join Traffic Tamers and to work with kids in creating the Traffic Tamer Party Kits.

By the end of week two, Sarah had earned two Bronze Magic Stars due to so many of her friends from school joining up. This entitled her to print her second trading card and she was encouraged to continue the tale of Magic's adventures while walking. Also that week both Sarah and her mother got a letter from the Mayor. Their city would be joining the network and supporting the program in schools. Sarah asked her mother whether she would be prepared to be the Traffic Tamer Champ for her class. Sarah was delighted when her mother said yes.

Sarah's mum picked up the Traffic Tamers School Kit from city hall. It included:

- a DVD with special presentations for different groups of people
- a briefing sheet for school staff
- pre-printed parent information sheets with space for putting school and class specific information
- a class wall chart with space to put information relevant to the class
- Parent Training Manuals for parents that did not have access to the web or wanted a printed version
- Walking Record Cards for kids without internet access
- a supply of Pace Car stickers,
- Traffic Tamer post box for the class room so kids could leave forms and drawings that Mrs. Yabanka could collect at her leisure without disturbing the teacher

- Adventure Diary covers to bind kids adventure drawings
- Personal Messages covers to bind personal messages that kids wanted to send to neighborhoods that would host a Traffic Tamer Street Party
- and stickers to put on the class kit so it was transformed into the Traffic Tamer Party Kit.

Mrs. Yabanka arranged a meeting with the Principal and the teacher of Sarah's class. Together they watched the special presentation for schools on the DVD and Mrs. Yabanka handed over the briefing sheets. Both the Principal and teacher were impressed that the program did not require the teacher to be involved other than allowing time for Mrs. Yabanka to show the class a presentation on the DVD. The other time involvement was giving the class a double recess when the class reached an average of one bronze star per student and a triple recess if the class reached an average of a silver star per student. (The double and triple recess were suggested rewards only. The school could choose a different reward like a pizza party or a trip to the zoo.) The teacher did not have to do anything, although she was informed that there were optional ways for her to integrate Traffic Tamers into her lesson plans. Both the principal and teacher gave their blessing.

As soon as Mrs. Yabanka got the approval from the school, she set up everything to begin the program. This took her just one evening. First she went to the web site and clicked [Class Clubs](#). She entered the name of the school, city, class name, teacher, number of kids in the class, the date that the Class Challenge would begin, the reward for achieving the first level, and some suggested drop off and pick up points ten minutes from the school. Next she chose a club name. The information about start up dates, drop off points and rewards were all automatically displayed on the class club page. Mrs. Yabanaka then downloaded an overprint for the Parent Information Brochure. The clever software again inserted all the relevant information from the registration details.

At the appointed time, Mrs. Yabanka showed Sarah's class the DVD, put up the wall chart, and left the Traffic Tamer Post Box. Each child got a copy of the Parents Information Sheet. It included the following main instructions.

- If the child was already part of Traffic Tamers (or if the child was just joining) they needed to go to the Class Clubs and click 'join this club' if they wanted their points to count towards the double recess.
- Parents and kids could get an update on progress and all the latest news by visiting the club. The club would display adventures the kids were having while walking; the suggested drop off points; and give a progress score.
- For those without internet access, the kids could still participate. Mrs. Yabanka would supply them with a Walking Record Card.
- Starting date of class challenge (if kids walked 5 times in first week, they would get triple points).
- Parents could complete the Certificate in Traffic Taming by going to the web site or by requesting a Parent Training Manual (star credited when the tear off portion was returned and put in post box).
- Parents sign up to be a Pace Car or if they already were, order stickers.
- Information on ordering the Traffic Tamer Street Party Kit.

The DVD explained to the class that there were two great ways to earn stars and get the double recess real quick. One was to walk 5 times in the first week after the class started the class

challenge. For this they would get triple points – three stars instead of one. The second way to earn stars as a class was to get lots of adults involved which meant getting residents in a street to host a Traffic Tamer Street Party using the Street Party Kit. To make this kit the class needed to create a Class Adventure Diary that documented the adventures they had while walking to school and a Personal Messages book that contained a personal message to the street from each child in the class. These could be deposited in the Traffic Tamer Post Box and Mrs. Yabanka would compile them. (What happened in reality was that the teacher, Ms Duffey, got so excited by the program that she got the kids to make pages as part of their art activities and she compiled the book herself.)

When the response coupons came back (a cut off portion on the bottom of the Parent Information Brochure) there were only seven kids without internet access that needed help in tracking their achievements. These children were given Walking Record Cards which had been supplied as part of the class kit. These record cards (together with information brochures and other materials) were also available online for Mrs. Yabanka to print out if she ran short. The children receiving the Walking Record Cards colored in one walking feet symbol for each time they walked. When they completed five symbols they would put the sheet in the post box (earning the class one more Magic Star). The site made entering the kids achievements very simple for Mrs. Yabanka because she did not need to enter individual children's achievements. She simply entered numbers in particular categories. For example, at the end of the first week, 3 of the seven non-registered kids returned their first Walking Record Cards. So Mrs. Yabank entered "3" in the category "children walking 5 times in first week". She also entered "9" in the category "parents who have completed the Parent Training Manual" and "12" in "Pace Cars". Because the web site automatically kept track of the achievements of the registered kids, Mrs. Yabanaka only had to enter data for the non-registered kids and for stars earned by the class as a total unit. The web site automatically calculated how many stars the registered children in that class had earned since the day that the class had accepted the class challenge. This was added to the points entered by Mrs. Yabanka. (Individual kids still kept the stars they had earned prior to the date that the class challenge started but these did not count towards the class total.)

Because Sarah's class had 21 students, they needed to earn 210 stars to reach their class target of an average of 1 Bronze Star per student. At the end of the first week the class had earned 72 stars. This was automatically displayed on each individual child's Star Tracker and on the Class Club home page. The message read "72 Magic Stars. Just 138 till you win the double recess." Sarah reported back to her mother that every morning all the class could talk about was how many stars they now had and how cool it was going to be to earn the double recess. Mrs. Yabanka was delighted at how easy it was to help the class keep track of its points while at the same time involve the kids without access to the internet.

Ms. Duffy became increasingly involved in Traffic Tamers because she started to see the potential for integrating it into her regular lessons. She loved the lesson plan suggestions that other teachers had posted on the web site. She could search these by 'suitable for ages' and 'subject area'. In fact, Ms. Duffy came up with two lesson plan ideas herself dealing with citizenship training and she posted these on the web site.

It only took Sarah's class three weeks to achieve Bronze Star status. During this three weeks they really egged each other on to walk and to make sure their parents had completed the Certificate course and sent emails to their friends encouraging them to join in. Sarah's mum baked a celebration cake and the class had a little mini-party in their double recess. The talk

was all about how they could get to silver so they could have the triple recess. They all agreed that getting some neighborhoods to run a Traffic Tamer Street Party would help them sign up lots more Pace Cars which would earn them heaps of stars.

Sarah asked her mum if they could set the example and be the first street to organize a Traffic Tamers Street Party. Her mum agreed.

Three of the Yabanka's neighbors came over on a Wednesday night for some drinks. It was the first time any of them had met formally, other than to nod hello. The conversation was a little stiff until Sarah presented the group with the *Traffic Tamer Street Party Kit*. Inside the box was a bucket of chalk, a ball, some personal messages from children in her class, an Adventure Diary and a DVD. The DVD explained to the group why the speed of traffic on their street was governed to a large extent by the degree of their psychological retreat from the street, and how they could psychologically reclaim their street. It showed them, step by step, how to organize a Traffic Tamer Street Party.

As the DVD finished playing, Sarah suddenly jumped to her feet. 'I've got an idea. To get everyone excited about the Street Party, lets show everyone in the street the DVD. We could project it onto the side of our house and get everyone to bring their chairs and sit on the footpath to watch it.'

'Great idea Sazza. You are a genius.' Sarah's dad gave her a big wink.

And it was a stroke of genius because everyone came to the street party knowing exactly why they were there. They began by talking about the ways they had retreated from their street. Even while they were discussing this, people commented that the traffic seemed to be going much slower. Someone suggested that because the speed of traffic was slower, they should move the conversation from the footpath to the parking bays on the side of the street. As soon as they did this, the speed of traffic dropped even further. They discussed how they may make their street look more like a room and less like a corridor.

'If we had some banners, we could create a ceiling for our room,' someone commented.

'Well in Italy they hang their washing over the street. That sure makes you feel like you are in someone else's outdoor living room!'

'Lets do it right now.'

While the washing was being strung over the street, a number of people took up their positions as 'Welcoming Hosts'. They offered motorists coffee and cake on a plate and explained why they were having a street party. They even invited the motorists to join them and a couple took up the offer. The kids used the chalk to create temporary murals on the street. Each time a car came along, someone would call 'car' and everyone would stand aside to let it through.

Sarah and a couple of her friends from her class went around getting people to sign the Pace Car Pledge. And everyone thought the Adventure Diary and Personal Messages book were delightful.

People began discussing ways they could continue to reclaim their street.

'You know this is not about traffic speed,' Mrs. McWattle, a delightful 86 years young, commented. 'This is about the quality of our neighborhood life. When I was a kid, we use to play in this street and there was a seat on the footpath where my mother would sit to shell peas. And while she shelled her peas she would chat to a couple of old people who lived in our street. It seems like they were always on that seat. They were the guardians of our street.'

'We should put a seat in our street,' piped up Sarah who had been absorbed in Mrs. McWattle's story. 'In fact we could turn our street into a Traffic Tamer Adventure Trail'.

'Adventure Trail?' asked one of the neighbors.

'Yes,' said Mrs. Yabanka. 'If kids can have adventures while they walk they are much more likely to walk. The Traffic Tamers web site has a 'How To' section that explains how to start a Walking School Bus, create a Traffic Tamer Adventure Trail, create activity nodes and reclaim your street. And then there is a 'Showcase' section that showcases what people all round the world are doing with each of these ideas.'

The following weekend the Yabankas were the first people to take down their front fence and create a small activity node outside their house. Eight neighbors came to help them. Mrs. Yabanka took photos and they posted them in the Traffic Tamer Adventure Trail section of the Showcase.

Three months after beginning the Class Challenge, Sarah's class achieved their silver star status and earned their triple recess. This time there were lots of parents at the party.

The City Engineer's Story

Michael Klay had been working for the Timboona City Council as the city engineer for four years. He was 48 years old, a practicing Catholic with 3 children aged 20, 17, and 14. He considered himself to be a progressive engineer with a social conscience, although his friends saw him as rather conservative. He was a great believer in community consultation, although of late it was beginning to wear a little thin. In the last month he had argued twice with his wife about being out too many nights attending resident meetings about traffic problems. He also felt stressed by the fact that there simply was not enough money in the city budget to traffic calm all the streets that asked for it.

The first Michael heard of Traffic Tamers was when the Mayor forwarded the emails and letters from Mrs. Yabanka and Sarah and asked him to investigate. Michael clicked on the link embedded in the email. This took Michael to an introduction, specifically designed for city officials, which made the following points:

- Traffic Tamers is a grass-roots program powered largely by children
- By tapping into this grass-roots movement, cities can save themselves significant money and headaches
- Traffic Tamers is a totally flexible program that can fit within an existing Traffic Calming or Safe Routes to School program. It can be used to supplement an existing program or be a stand-alone program.

Next Michael saw David Engwicht (who he had heard of but knew nothing about) talking to a group of residents who were demanding traffic calming. The scenario painted in the scene resonated with his experience of working with residents... they wanted to traffic calm everyone else... but drove like a bat out of hell when they were behind the wheel. Even though David looked a bit radical and 'out there' Michael liked the points he was making about residents needing to take personal responsibility for their own car use.

Next Michael clicked the message:

- Yes! Please continue to tell me how our city can reduce its reliance on Traffic Calming and can get residents to take personal responsibility for reducing traffic volume and speed through a self-help program.

Michael watched the video that gave an overview of how Traffic Tamers works. He then decided to watch the video presentation for kids and he watched several presentations from the adult section of the DVD that came in the class kit.

By now Michael was convinced that Timboona should try Traffic Tamers, providing it did not cost too much because the city was on a tight budget. He clicked "typical cost of a program" and entered the population of Timboona. He was presently surprised to find out that a typical program for a city of this size would cost about the equivalent of 4 speed bumps! It was also suggested that if budgets were already set, and that Timboona wanted to make an instant start, that they should delay just one traffic calming project and put this money into Traffic Tamers.

Michael emailed the Mayor to say that he thought the city should commit to Traffic Tamers, and because it fell within the discretionary amount for him to spend as department head, he proposed that he proceed immediately. The mayor agreed.

Michael went to the web site and joined the City Network. He registered as the administrator for Timboona, and nominated his Deputy, Jenny Bell, as an additional administrator. He provided information about the city and how they were going to support the program. This was made very simple because he could click standard ways of supporting the program and add additional information. (When people did a search to see if their city was part of the network, these 'standard modes of support' were featured as a table at the top.)

- Class room kits
- Free Pace Car stickers for residents
- Neighborhood Traffic Tamer Kit
- Other _____

Michael entered details of where materials were available from and he took note of the instructions to update the program details as the city grew the program. He then ordered some printed materials direct from the suppliers recommended by the site. He then checked with Jenny to see if she was free to attend the next 2 day training event for city officials in San Francisco or Vancouver. He booked into the Vancouver event.

Before leaving the site he clicked the Random adventures button and had a chuckle at the kids drawings. He clicked 'show me another random adventure' 3 times. He also had a look at the Traffic Tamer Adventure Trail section in the Showcase and discovered that he could ask for a 'random story' or do a search by city and find the location of Adventure Trails in his city. 'Clever idea,' he thought. 'Imagine kids going to the web site to find the closest adventure trail. Or imagine residents planning their walks to take in Adventure Trails.' He put Timboona into the search box and was amazed to see that there was already an Adventure Trail in Timboona – created by the Yabankas and their neighbors. That afternoon he and Jenny drove out to have a look. 'Wow!' he said to Jenny. 'This stuff really looks like it may work. I never thought about the impact that fences may have on speed. I am beginning to really like this idea of a self-help program for residents.'

'I know,' replied Jenny enthusiastically. 'Have you checked out the examples of what people are doing to reclaim their streets and keep motorists intrigued?' All the way back to city hall she related examples she had found on the site.

'You know, I'm not ready to rip out all the traffic control devices... just yet, but I like where this is taking us as a town,' said Michael, covering his bases just a little.

From that day, whenever residents came to city hall complaining about traffic, they were given a brochure explaining the Traffic Tamers approach and were encouraged to go to the web site and find the school closest to them that had a Traffic Tamer Street Party Kit. One day Sarah had a brainwave. Rather than waiting for neighborhoods to come to them asking for their Street Party Kit why not make up a number of kits and leave them at the library. They approached Michael and he was only too happy to provide the kit materials... and advertise on their city web entry that the kits were now available direct from libraries.

After Michael and Jenny attended the training course in Vancouver they came back all fired up to really make Traffic Tamers fly. They created a joint project with a local radio station to create a *Traffic Tamers Caravan* that would broadcast from any street that was doing something to make it safer for kids. Residents would get free coffee and could view a display of what other streets in the city were doing. It became a real status symbol to have the Traffic Tamer Caravan broadcast from your street and kids really worked on their parents to get together and do something really special.

Jenny suggested to Michael that they should really feature the Traffic Tamer Caravan in the Showcase. They had some photos taken and uploaded them, along with a short story. They were delighted when Traffic Tamers selected this as 'showcase of the week' that came up whenever someone with the membership class of 'city official' went to the web site.

That year Michael and Jenny also made some suggestions via the Ideas for Improving Traffic Tamers Forum that were actually picked up and incorporated into the next year's version of Traffic Tamers. They liked the fact that they could be actively involved in evolving the Traffic Tamers program. They were particularly proud when their city was featured on the next year's DVD, which was updated every year.

Tamika's Story

Tamika is a 38 year old health professional working for the State Health Department on improving kids nutrition. She has been trying to establish partnerships with Safe Routes to School programs but is frustrated with having to work one school at a time.

Tamika found the Traffic Tamers web site while doing a search on Walking School Buses. She loved the grass-roots nature of Traffic Tamers and the way it was motivating kids to change their behavior. She immediately sent an email to Traffic Tamers asking whether there was some way that nutrition could be promoted as part of the Traffic Tamers program.

The result was a partnership between the State Health Department and Traffic Tamers. A new story was put on the Traffic Tamers web site in which Red, Fleet and the Traffic Taming Wizard encouraged kids to have a 'Power Breakfast' before walking to school. A special week was designated as *Power Breakfast Week* and children who walked and had a power breakfast during this week earned triple points towards their Magic Stars. If they walked 5 days and had five power breakfasts they got a bonus Magic Star.

For its part, the State Health Department provided Traffic Tamers with the nutritional material that went on the site. They also published a Z card which, on one side, featured the story of Red

and Fleet encouraging kids to have a power breakfast, and on the other side, information about what makes up a power breakfast. Traffic Tamers coordinated the production of this Z card. The Health Department then made this Z card available to all cities in their state who were supporting the Traffic Tamer program. They also made it available to schools who were running the Traffic Tamer program.

Tamika was able to convince a number of cities to join the Traffic Tamers program because of these added health benefits for kids. The Z card became a collectors item for kids collecting Traffic Tamers memorabilia. Tamika did some follow-up research and discovered that 48% of the children who completed five days of power breakfasts continued to have power breakfasts before they walked to school. This was significantly higher than for any other program she had been involved in. Tamika presented a paper to three international conferences about how her Health Department had been able to use the Traffic Tamers program to promote nutritional breakfasts for children.

George and Betty's Story

George and Betty are in their early fifties and their only son completed his training as a sports psychologist and is currently working overseas. Betty is a retired nurse and George is the purchasing officer for a stationary shop. They have two silky terriers, Mat and Pat, which Betty absolutely dotes on. For the past three years she has been lobbying Timboona City for traffic calming in her street. Her major concern is the well being of Mat and Pat, the two dogs. Michael and Jenny have visited the street twice to do traffic and speed counts and according to the criterion by which they choose streets to be traffic calmed, George and Betty's streets simply did not meet the criterion. They had said that George and Betty's street would go on the waiting list but it would probably be years before the city had the funds to do their street. Six months ago, George and Betty, who were very community minded, had enough and finally erected a six foot front fence. It seemed a real shame because Betty was very proud of her flower garden and now no one would get to see it.

One evening someone did a donut outside George and Betty's house at 2am. The next morning Betty, who now had Michael's direct line number, was on the phone. "Michael, I don't care what it takes... speed humps, stop signs, just give us something."

"Look Betty, we might just have an answer for your street. A new program that helps you and your neighbors work together in slowing the traffic yourself. Are you on the internet?"

"Yes. But I am not entirely sure how it all works, but George surfs the net all the time."

"Well give me your email address and I will send you some information immediately."

All the Council staff, including the Councilors and police, now had a standard email that they sent to anyone complaining about traffic. The link in the email took residents to an introductory tour which Michael was able to customize for Timboona. He was able to insert specific information about how Timboona supported the program and there was even a message from the Mayor. The city logo appeared on all these introductory pages. Michael sent the standard email to Betty:

Dear George and Betty,

Timboona City Council is proud to be supporting a campaign for less traffic and slower traffic across our entire city. For too long we have only been able to calm some streets

in our city while leaving other streets to suffer. I think you will agree, everyone, including you, deserve to have less traffic and slower traffic in their street.

To find out how you and your neighbors can work together in bringing traffic speed down in your street please click [this link](#).

If you have further questions, or we can help you implement this program, then please do not hesitate to email me. If the Traffic Tamers program does not help you resolve the current problems to your satisfaction, Council will investigate further.

Yours for a better and safer Timboona

Michael Klay, DipEng

Chief City Engineer.

Even though Betty did not feel confident on the web, she decided to click the link anyway, and if she got lost she would wait for George to come home. Mat was on her lap, and Pat sat on the desk next to the monitor, just looking at Betty with big brown eyes.

Betty was given a tour that introduced her to the key concepts in Traffic Tamers. The tour ended by showing her how she could become a registered member of Traffic Tamers and get access to all the resources in the 'Timboona Residents' section of the web site. Alternatively, she could borrow the Traffic Tamer Street Party Kit from the library (the kit that Sarah and her class had created).

Betty felt a little intimidated by the idea of registering. She would do that when George came home. In the meantime she thought it would be a good idea to go to the library, which was only three blocks away, and borrow the Traffic Tamer Street Party Kit. She would take it just for a day and then take it straight back. She was going to drive, but the moment she picked up the car keys she remembered that one of the magic ways to tame traffic was to 'rest your dragon wagon'. So she got the old shopping trolley out of the storage cupboard and dusted it off. She put Mat and Pat on their retractable leads and headed off for the library. As she walked down the street she saw Mrs. Phelps, a sprightly 72 year old, doing some gardening. 'Haven't seen you out walking for years Betty,' Mrs. Phelps said surprised.

Betty stopped for a chat and explained that she was going to get some information about slowing the traffic in the street. Mrs. Phelps offered to do anything she could to help.

The librarian was very helpful, explaining to Betty that she should read the personal messages from the children then watch the residents section of the DVD. 'Oh goodness,' said Betty, 'I hadn't realized the kit would be that big. Just as well I brought my old shopping trolley. You know I haven't used this trolley for 15 years?'

'Well I think you may be using it a lot more after you watch this,' said the librarian with a smile.

Reading the children's Adventure Diaries and their Personal Messages bought a tear to Betty's eye. It rekindled so much of her own childhood memories. It kind of got her in the right frame of mind to watch the DVD, which was far more playful than what she had expected. Betty was so excited by what she saw she immediately went down the road and invited Mrs. Phelps to come up for tea and biscuits. After watching the DVD together they began to discuss ways that they could work together in reclaiming their street and making it safe so kids could walk again. They made a pact that every morning, in the hours that kids were walking to school, they would sit out on the footpath in front of Mrs. Phelps and say hello to whoever was walking by. They even

decided that they may try waving at motorists and see what happened. It just might work. They also decided that they would try and organize a Traffic Tamer Street Party.

When George got home, Betty told him about her exciting discovery. George was very skeptical and very confused. He did not have the faintest idea what Betty was talking about. So Betty suggested he look at the email and click the link. Then he should have a look at the Traffic Tamer Street Party Kit. George spied the contents of the Street Party Kit on the table and couldn't resist first looking at the kids adventure book. He then read the email from Michael and followed the link to Timboona's personalized tour of the site. He decided to register so he could learn a little more and explore the site.

'Come and look at the DVD,' Betty instructed for the third time. Finally George left the web site and joined Betty in watching the DVD. She had seen it twice already, so was laughing at her favorite bits as they came up.

George was still a little skeptical... but he thought it was probably worth a try. He went back onto the web site to check what support the city offered in running a Traffic Tamer Street Party. 'Look Betty. We could get the BV78 [local radio station] Traffic Taming Caravan to visit our street. That would slow em down.'

The next night Betty told George about the morning experiment of sitting outside Mrs. Phelps house and waving to the motorists. 'It really works! They really do go slower!' We just had the best time. Five people stopped to pat Mat and Pat. They have not had so much attention for years. You know, I'm going to visit the Bensons up the road. They drive their kids to school even though it is only six blocks. I am going to get them to watch the DVD and tell them about how Mrs. Phelps and I will be watching out for her kids if she lets them walk. This could be the start of an adventure trail in our street.'

'It's great to see you passionate about something Betty.' George leaned over and gave her a peck on the forehead. She looked like someone had wiped 20 years off her age overnight

'Let's get some exercise,' George suggested to Betty, feeling his own vitality rising.

'You mean go for a walk? Why we haven't done that in years.'

George gave her a wink. 'Well I guess we could do that as well.'

Some ideas not in story

- ❑ Kids able to leave blurts for their city that anyone can read
- ❑ Cities Network to be part of a Resources Data Base. Visitors to the site will be able to see what help is available in their city for running the school and neighborhood program. This may include information about non-profits that are offering support, companies offering services, etc.
- ❑ Business opportunities – ideas for how people can create products/ make a profit from Traffic Tamers. This would include a service that we would offer to companies to help them create a product.

Please send your ideas for improving this program to David Engwicht: david@lesstraffic.com.