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The Metro Support Services Center (MSSC) is home to the Logistics Walkers, a group of Metro employees who use their lunch breaks to exercise by walking as far as three miles.

*Photo by Jimmy Stroup*

## 'Logistics Walkers' Work Out by Walking on their Lunch Breaks

By JIMMY STROUP

(May 15, 2008) The Logistics Walkers group can be seen walking at breakneck speeds as far away as Chinatown in an effort to keep healthy, which fits nicely with the agency's recent wellness campaign.

This group of 20 or so who work at the Metro Support Services Center (MSSC) decided in January that it was time to use their lunch hours to do something more than simply eat.

"They tease us that we go to eat, but we don't," said Margaret James, Inventory Management material manager and one of the unofficial leaders of the Logistics Walkers. "We do end up in some interesting places though."

Sometimes the group heads to Chinatown. Other times they head toward City Hall. The core group will walk as far as three or four miles in an hour, depending on where they're heading that day.

"We've found some neat routes," said Inventory Management material supervisor Lorraine Melendez, also one of the unofficial leaders of the walking group. "We're looking for interesting places to go and things to see because it keeps it fresh, and that keeps us motivated."

The Logistics Walkers make use of pedometers to record how many steps they take on a daily basis. Pedometers have been cropping up all over the agency in the last year or so – thanks in large part to the American Red Cross, which has been helping the agency with fitness information and equipment lately.

## 10,000 steps a day

The Red Cross advises that everyone take 10,000 steps a day; that's roughly four miles of walking each day. So even if the Logistics Walkers do a two-mile trek on their lunch break, they're only halfway to an

optimal goal.

James said the group figured it would need to create some incentives to keep people investing time and energy into the daily walks. So, each week, members log what the pedometers recorded as their total steps for the week. If the walkers log their steps, they're eligible for a monthly drawing to win things like workout gear, ankle or wrist weights, or classic Metro hats or water bottles.

"When we won our money from the [Safety Health Assessment Review Program] audit, we figured we could use that to encourage people to stay healthy," James said. "We figured this was the best way to spend that money to benefit everyone."

James and her fellow walkers also spent some money to personalize their safety vests. Their vests were embroidered with their names on the front and proudly proclaim "Logistics Walkers: Walking for my Health" on the back.

The vests make the Logistics Walkers conspicuous as they walk through the downtown streets. And since their regimens carry them through public areas – like the Union Station Red and Purple Line platform – Metro riders will ask them for directions or information about the system.

The Logistics Walkers happily oblige the patron, but aren't slowing down to answer. Those with questions get their information on the move.

"It doesn't help much if you not moving. If you're going at a slow pace, you may as well be sitting in a chair and just swinging your legs," Melendez said. "You've got to get that cardio going."

Metro's Logistics Walkers can be seen winging their way through Union Station on their way to better health every weekday sometime between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. James said people shouldn't be shy if they want to join them on their daily constitution.