

Ian Thomas, Ph.D.

Project Director
PedNet Coalition

Ian Thomas is the Project Director of *Bike, Walk, and Wheel: A Way of Life in Columbia* and a founding Board member of the PedNet Coalition - a grass-roots, non-profit advocacy group for pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair users in Columbia, Missouri.

PedNet's vision is to create a city-wide network of sidewalks, pedways, bike lanes, and trails that enables everyone to use active transportation for commuting, errands, and recreation. After 5 years of volunteer effort, 4,600 local residents have signed up in support of PedNet's vision, the network plan has been included in Columbia's long-range transportation policy, new bike/ped friendly City Street Standards have been adopted, and the discussion of active transportation in local government, the media, and the general community has been raised to new levels.

In 2003, Thomas assembled a multidisciplinary partnership and won a \$200,000 Active Living by Design grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Recent programs to encourage children to be more physically active include Walking School Buses and a *Passport to Fitness* Youth Challenge. The drive to improve city infrastructure for active transportation is currently focusing on advocacy efforts to accelerate the installation of absent sidewalks around elementary schools.