



IPEI Grants Help Elementary Students Train

Friday, May 30, 2014 12:00 AM | Written by Mary Grainger | 



This spring ICSD students are getting fit.

By the end of May, more than 470 Ithaca City School District (ICSD) students across all elementary grade levels will have run a full marathon.

With the help of three separate Ithaca Public Education Initiative (IPEI) grants, students at Northeast, Fall Creek and Cayuga Heights Elementary Schools have been running and logging their distance each day, with the goal of running 26.2 miles—a full marathon—by the end of this month. Their training will culminate when students from all three schools run in the Ithaca Festival Mile race on May 29.

"The grand finale, running the Ithaca Festival Mile, is a wonderful community event that they get to do with their families, and they feel really proud of themselves," said Fall Creek first grade teacher Abigail Bokaer.

"I like the idea that kids are a lot stronger than people think they are," said Cayuga Heights third grade teacher Spencer Hill, noting that each student is developing their own individual level of endurance and stamina throughout the program. "This teaches them that it's OK for things to be challenging. Students should be allowed to push themselves a little bit, whether it's in athletics or academics."

Northeast's all-school program, funded by an IPEI Community Collaboration Grant, involves community partner Will Glennon of the Ithaca Youth Bureau's (IYB) Marathon Miles program, who developed and implemented a running curriculum that includes motivation training, running technique instruction, interactive running activities, and training of parent volunteers. "Some of the talking points have been heart rate, running etiquette, running pace, starting a race in a crowd and what to do at the finish of a race," Glennon said.

Northeast created a quarter-mile path around the school's back fields that has enabled students to track their progress and train with their families on weekends. In addition to the Ithaca Festival Mile run, Northeast students, families and staff will run a final mile together in June.

Fall Creek first graders and Cayuga Heights third graders have been running around their playgrounds, which they measured, and have been logging their distance every day. Fall Creek's program is funded by an IPEI Teacher Grant and is part of the IYB's Marathon Miles program. The Cayuga Heights "Chargers Running Program" is funded by an IPEI Red and Gold Grant.



At all three schools, the students are tracking and graphing their progress in various ways, using hands-on math skills in measurement and data. Glennon said this distance tracking has been impactful, as each student has increased awareness of what they are accomplishing—a key aspect of New York State physical education standards. Other benefits, he said, include the “common bond theme.” “At Northeast the entire school runs for 10 minutes every Thursday at a different scheduled time,” he said. “With the music playing and everyone out on the field it is really fun to watch and be a part of.”

“The kids set a goal and work towards it in small chunks each day,” Bokaer said. “While running every day, they experience how much they can build up their endurance, and how they get stronger over the course of three months. They’re getting a good dose of physical activity, and this helps them focus on their work for the rest of the day. The academic demands put on young children are high these days, and the running gives them an outlet for their energy.”

“The most important element of the program is creating a culture that exercise is fun and running is fun,” Glennon said. “Along with this element, creating a habit of exercise on a daily basis is beneficial for their cardiovascular health and recent research has linked running to increasing students’ ability to focus in the classroom.”

v10i20

Tweet  1

Share  1

[< Prev](#)

[Next >](#)

© 2005-2014 by [L-Star Publishing, Inc.](#)