

# Spring Wellness Walk-a-Thon at Washington Oak School



Angelena Chapman•Daily Times

First-graders, along with some of their families, and faculty and staff participate in the school-wide Spring Wellness Walk-a-Thon held at Washington Oak Elementary School in Coventry on Friday, done to raise money for their playground.

## Kids do a “good deed” for their school

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COVENTRY—It was the day before April vacation and class by class all the students at Washington Oak Elementary School got to head outside to do a good deed for their school and for their health.

On Friday, the entire Washington Oak community was invited to be a part of their Spring Wellness Walk-a-Thon.

Gym teacher Amy McGovern also used the walk to kick off the fitness unit that kids will be beginning when they return from April vacation next week.

The walk was presented by the Playground Committee of the Washington Oak Parent Teacher Association (PTA).

Melissa Wallenstein, a parent, is the playground coordinator.

Principal Dr. Donna Raptakis said the walk was done to show their commitment

to improving the playground.

Each class and their teachers went out at different times during the day to walk around the track at Washington Oak.

Raptakis said they also wanted to involve parents and all parents and families were invited to come and walk with their kids.

McGovern said during the Walk-a-Thon that she was having the opportunity to talk with a lot of parents.

“We’re able to let them know what’s going on and why we’re doing it and the kids get to spend time with their parents,” McGovern said, “The whole Washington Oak community is involved.”

Raptakis said that they focus a lot at Washington Oak on community service and are involved with the Feinstein Good Deeds program.

The kids were “doing a good deed for their school,” Raptakis said.

Kids were invited ahead of time to wear their Feinstein t-shirts and sweatshirts on the day of the walk.

The track itself was built partially through a \$10,000 donation from Alan

Shawn Feinstein, Raptakis said. The track was put in two years ago.

McGovern said that the kids know the track is the size of a real legitimate track and that four times around it equals a mile.

“The track is used by everybody,” Raptakis said.

McGovern said that especially the special education students enjoy utilizing the track.

“Because it is nice and flat,” Raptakis said that parents will come before school starts to use it or will stay after school with their kids.

She also said that teachers will take their students out during the day to take “learning walks.”

All 687 students from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade participated as well as all faculty and staff, Raptakis said.

To raise money for the improvements to the playground families sent donations in with their students all week, whatever they wanted, Raptakis said.

Raptakis also wanted to mention that the Walk-a-Thon fits in with the health

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## Walk-a-thon promotes health, raises funds

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and wellness aspect of the school improvement team.

They held a similar walk in the fall around Halloween.

What they would like to do with the money they raise is blacktop the playground, Raptakis said.

Right now she said there is not access for the handicapped and that it gets very muddy, leaving nowhere for the students to play.

The playground will be first and foremost for Washington

Oak's children during recess and then opened up to the community after school hours.

Monetary or donations of other services can still be made to the Washington Oak PTA and if anyone would like to help they can contact playground coordinator, Melissa Wallenstein, or Principal Dr. Donna Raptakis. Washington Oak Elementary School can be reached at 397-1976.

"It involves everybody," Raptakis said, "the kids are giving back to the school."