



Kendra Leigh Miller • Daily Times

Students, faculty, and parents enjoyed sunny skies yesterday when they took to the walking path at Coventry's Washington Oak Elementary to raise money for the food bank and school needs.

# Walk-a-thon at Washington Oak is a smash

## Students, faculty, parents join in fundraiser Friday

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COVENTRY — More than 600 students took to the walking path at Washington Oak Elementary School's field Friday during their second annual walk-a-thon to raise money for the Coventry food bank and school-related needs such as improving technology.

Between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. students from pre-K to grade five came out in groups and each grade group walked for 20 minutes with their teachers and some parents.

Cindy Anderson and Alison Dottor, both vice presidents of fundraising, said last year the students raised \$6,000. This year the goal is double that.

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# Washington Oak walk-a-thon a hit

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Principal Don Cowart is in his first year at Washington Oak. He came from the Cranston school system where the student population took part in the same type of fundraiser.

"I think it's a great idea that I'm completely behind," he said. "It's great to raise money but it's also great to build community and school spirit."

Organizers found this to be a great way to get the whole school involved at the same time, promote families getting healthy together and everyone being involved in the community.

Dottor explained that when the school participated in previous fundraisers, depending on what it was, another outside party would be involved and the majority of the money would have to go to pay them. "This will be out big

fundraiser and all the money stays right here; it's perfect," she said.

Students got pledges to walk and they could walk in groups, with teachers, with their parents — however they wished.

Parent Laurie Ellison has a son in third grade and was happy to take some time from her day at work to join him in the walk.

"I love that fact that it's a fundraiser that promotes

health and wellness," she said. "It gets family and the school family together and there's nothing you have to buy and things aren't like they used to be where the kids can go door to door to fundraise anymore so this is perfect."

First-grade teacher Melissa Bibeault waked alongside her students and when she was lining them up to go back inside said she saw that both the parents and the students were excited for today.

"This helped get our year off to a great start with school spirit and getting the kids back on track," Bibeault said. "And, this is an activity they can keep doing now and throughout their lives."



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Parents enjoyed the chance to walk the path at Washington Oak with their children yesterday at the school's walk-a-thon fundraiser.