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Baldwin Park Elementary Students Finish Last Mile of Marathon Run

BALDWIN PARK – A surge of red-cheeked runners rounded the last corner of the Baldwin Park High School track on March 23 as more than 160 students in transitional kindergarten through sixth grade from Baldwin Park Unified’s Tracy and Vineland elementary schools completed the final mile of a 26.2-mile marathon.

Tracy and Vineland students signed on as part of Rod Dixon’s Kids Marathon Run Club to complete in weekly stages a marathon’s 26.2 miles. The international program teaches the benefits of regular exercise and nurtures a passion for running.

“I love to run and it feels great to finish a full marathon,” said Tracy second-grader Nathan Cabanillas, who placed first for his age group. “I’m excited for next year because I want to run more miles and be faster than this year.”

Students ran in groups according to their grades, with all of them crossing the finish line to receive medals from Tracy Elementary Principal Erika Valenzuela, Vineland Elementary Principal Dr. Laura Rodriguez, Director of Student Achievement Dr. Maria Rios and Baldwin Park Unified Superintendent Dr. Froilan N. Mendoza.

The young runners were joined by members of the Baldwin Park High School track team to conclude the final mile celebration. Families and educators in the stands waved pom-poms and chanted their school names while the high school band performed pieces with an upbeat tempo.

“This is my second year on Rod Dixon’s team and I like it because I get to stay healthy while I have fun with my friends,” Vineland second-grader Adrian Parra said.

Dixon, winner of an Olympic bronze medal in the 1500 meters, is a two-time medalist in the World Cross Country Championship – the largest international cross-country marathon in the world – and winner of the 1983 New York City Marathon.

Through Dixon’s eight- to 10-week program, students learn the importance of nutrition and exercise habits to inspire positive practices for life-long health.

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“This program has really become a movement for the students – they are excited to learn more warm-ups and exercises, and they are dedicated to improving,” Dr. Rodriguez said. “Our goal is to get more Baldwin Park Unified schools involved next year because we have seen the tremendous benefits it has on our students.”

PHOTOS

BPUSD_ROD_DIXON_1: Tracy and Vineland Elementary students from kindergarten through sixth grade dash to complete the last mile of a 26.2-mile marathon as part of Rod Dixon’s Kids Marathon Run Club. Since October, students have been running in weekly stages to finish the marathon with March 23 marking the final mile.

BPUSD_ROD_DIXON_2: Students round the track on March 23 to cross the finish line and complete the last mile of a 26.2-mile marathon. Rod Dixon’s Kids Marathon Run Club is an international program that teaches the benefits of regular exercise and nurtures a passion for running.

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