

Run Club Brings Early Risers to La Jolla Elementary

How do you get 75 percent of your elementary school to arrive 20 minutes early in order to run laps before class? Start a Run Club!

La Jolla Elementary opens its gates each morning to a horde of eager runners. Students, parents and teachers head purposefully up to the field, pick up their scan cards and begin running or walking laps.



After each lap they slow down to have their cards scanned by parent volunteers using the new Student Lap Tracker System. It automatically tracks each runner's daily and cumulative laps, and it has contributed to the popularity boom of the Run Club at the public school this year.

"This automated Run Club system is really motivating our students to get more exercise every day, which helps their overall health and their ability to concentrate in class," said Principal Donna Tripi. "We also have noticed fewer tardies in the morning. We have nearly 100 percent participation, with more than 500 runners in grades 1-5."

"I always want to be at school in time for Run Club," said 4th grader Lauren Nitahara, who is proud to report to her family each evening the number of laps she ran that morning. Parent volunteers, too, are gratified.

"Volunteering for the Run Club scanning is really rewarding. I truly enjoy getting to know students from all grades, and the Lap Tracker is also a conversation piece at dinner," said Bjorn Backlund, parent volunteer.

"Approximately 75 percent of our student population runs each day. It's a great way for the students to start their day. I thank our excellent PE Teacher, Kelly Wiskus, and our parent volunteers for making it happen," said Tripi.

Coach Wiskus has been working toward this degree of success since she started Run Club three years ago. At the end of each year, she holds an awards ceremony to honor the runners and their miles.

"It is so great to see the students and parents out there every morning exercising and building healthy habits that will last a lifetime!"