

**WHITELEY SUPERSONICS RUNNING CLUB
FRANK C. WHITELEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED S.D. 15**

(as written by the teacher organizer)

Whiteley School is honored to begin our third year with a tremendous running club. Last year we saw roughly 100 students participate in the program that emphasizes fun, fitness and friendship.

The school's run club was formed to offer all students in grades 4-6 an opportunity to find their own "inner athlete", and to combat the growing trend of childhood obesity. The run club gives kids a fun and safe vehicle to push themselves, as they begin to notice how their physical stamina and self-confidence improve through a little consistent practice. By participating in the club, they discover the internal rewards of goal-setting and hard work as they experience their own personal transformation.

Returning from spring break, our club meets two days a week after school as we prepare for the "Got2Run for Education" race. Students determine which event to train for (2.62 micro-marathon or the 8K), and then follow a training program to prepare them for their goal. The 1-hour sessions are comprised of learning about fitness, being inspired by other runners, stretching, and a mixture of running and cardio games. Each week we have student volunteers give short presentations on inspiring runners (eg: Kathrine Switzer, Terry Fox, Usain Bolt, family members, etc.). Each week we try to bring in guest speakers (local coaches, high school runners, parents who run, etc.) to share tips with the kids and run with us. Kids also have a "homework" assignment for the weekend – a specific plan for how much to walk or run depending on their own personal goal. Our meetings end with cool down stretches and a snack, and then kids are released to be picked up by their parents.

Club success is largely dependent on volunteers that help organize the meetings. At Whiteley, roughly a dozen different teachers help the club function. Collaborating with their schedules, teachers team up to make sure there are a handful of staff members at every meeting. There are also nearly a dozen parent volunteers who come when they can to help facilitate the meetings. Many parents and siblings are motivated by the students and wind up joining them in the training and the race. To help motivate all our runners before their big day, club members create a team banner signed by all members, to bring to the race.

Registration in the club requires a parent permission slip and a signed district waiver. With a registration cost of \$20, each student receives a team shirt (with a team logo on the front and an entire team roster on the back), snacks at each meeting, and a pizza party at season's end. Participation in the race is a separate registration fee paid through the race website.

As we crossed the finish line of our season, we were treated to a video montage created by one of our parent volunteers. The countless smiles on sweaty red faces were a perfect testimony to the impact the club is having, preparing students to incorporate fitness as part of their lifestyles.