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St. Mark School wins national award

Students hit the pavement in fight against diabetes

by KATIE MOORE

staff writer

HUNTERSVILLE — A local Catholic school received national honors from the American Diabetes Association for the most money raised by a school in the 2008 National Walk for Diabetes.

For raising \$52,000, an award from the ADA was presented to St. Mark School in Huntersville by local WCNC weatherman Larry Sprinkle March 23.

Sprinkle served as master of ceremonies at an assembly to kickoff this year's two-week campaign which will culminate with the walk for diabetes April 3.

"I think our school is passionate about the fight against diabetes because in one way or another most families have been affected by it," said Megan Findley, physical education teacher and faculty coordinator for the event.

"We also have several students attending St. Mark who struggle with diabetes," she said. The school has participated in the event for the past six years.

Each year, students raise money by collecting pledges from friends, family and neighbors.

Other fundraisers include selling raffle tickets and an in-school "penny wars" competition, in which classes compete to see which one can collect the most pennies.

On the day of the walk the classes take turns covering 45 minute shifts, so that between 8:30 a.m. and 2:15 p.m. there are always students walking.

Throughout the two weeks prior to the walk, the school teaches the students about the disease and the importance of maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle as a means for preventing some forms of diabetes.

"We really use this opportunity to teach the students about making healthy lifestyle choices," said Janis Boone, public relations coordinator for the school.

Another reason that the fundraiser is so popular is because the money collected is used on a local level.

"All of the money raised goes to help kids with diabetes go to Camp Carolina Trails," said Findley.

Camp Carolina Trails is a special camp for kids with diabetes. Along with regular camp activities, such as sports and arts and crafts, campers are educated on ways to manage their diabetes and learn skills to help them become more independent.

The camp also helps them “realize they are normal children because most of the other campers have diabetes as well,” Findley said.

For the past three years, St. Mark School has been the highest money-raiser for the National Walk for Diabetes in the Southeast.

This was their first time winning the national title.

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