

# Colorado's Promising Partnership Practices

## Skyway Elementary's Sky is the Limit Marathon

### Description/Summary

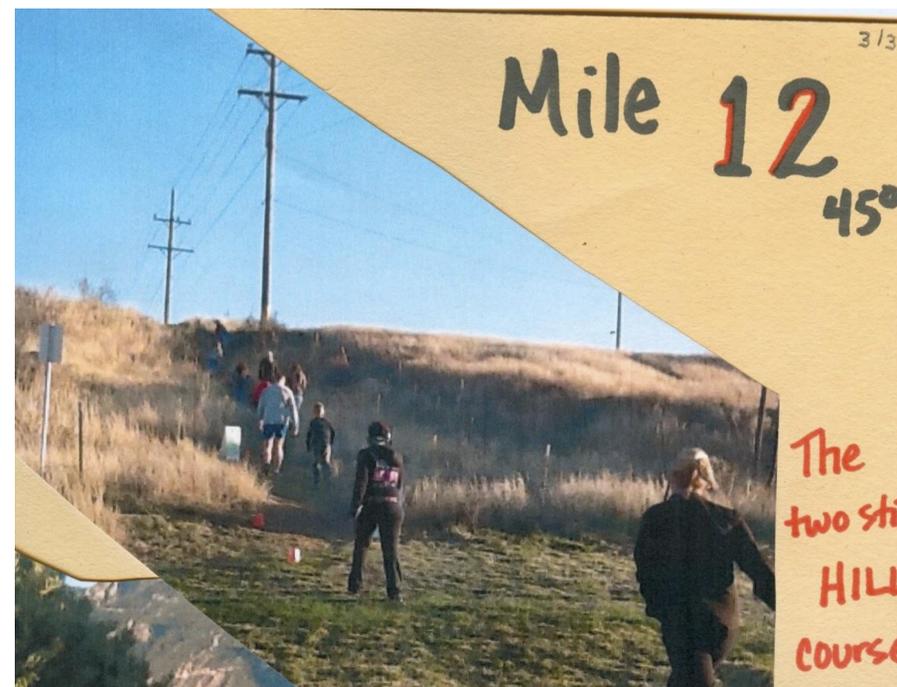
Nestled in the southwest corner of Colorado Springs lies Skyway Elementary School, the only Title I school in Cheyenne Mountain District 12. While one of the oldest D12 schools, it yields some of the most community-rich traditions in the district, including the annual Sky is the Limit Marathon each spring. Beginning in mid-February, students are encouraged, 2 mornings per week, to run as many laps as needed to equal a mile on each day's designated course, with the goal of reaching 25.2 miles by late May. During the last week of the school year, the final Marathon mile is run, with great celebration, on the track at Cheyenne Mountain High School. Those students who have earned their 25.2 miles get to finish their Marathon on the track, while the rest of the student body cheers them on from the stands.



**Skyway Elementary Website**  
<http://skyway.cmsd12.org>

### It Takes a Village to Make the Village Run

It's not completing the marathon that is the greatest, noteworthy accomplishment, although many students, parents, and community members over the years know that reaching the Marathon finish line is a challenge in and of itself. What truly makes this annual event incredibly special are the staff and community members who make it happen. Every Tuesday and Thursday morning (and for Friday afternoon make-up miles) Mark Sessions, PE Teacher, and Mary Whitman, School Counselor, determine which course to run, how many laps equal a mile, set the playlist to keep folks moving, set up tables and clipboards for volunteers, and prepare to pass out popcicle sticks to track laps that will equal mileage upon check-in. 7:15 AM can be grueling in a snowstorm or in pouring rain, but if it is a marathon morning, Mark and Mary are ready to make it happen!



### Focus Beyond Fitness

For the 2017 marathon, Mary & Mark featured a children's book for each Marathon mile morning and had pictures of those book covers in the main hallway to encourage reading. If there is a holiday or the week is highlighting a particular event in the community, it is promoted during a Marathon morning. One particular morning, Mary's brother and a well-loved former Skyway principal joined students and parents to promote bicycle safety day.

### Community Benefits with Every Mile

While students, parents, neighbors, and staff run or walk their laps every Tuesday and Thursday morning, visitors are privy to seeing what really makes the Skyway Marathon a special event. For 11 years, Mark and Mary have used this opportunity to highlight fitness, community, positive social relationships, family, every special day imaginable, and fun without ever seeking recognition for their work. Many times, parents or community businesses have offered to "help" transition the event to become a fundraiser. Mark & Mary have no interest in this proposition, for that is not, and never has been, their purpose. The purpose has always been, and will always be, an occasion where parents can spend a little time, even if it's only 15 minutes before school, walking with their child(ren) or others to get one more stick toward accomplishing their goal of finishing their marathon...the first of many in their lives.