

Sky is the Limit Marathon

Skyway Elementary School

Colorado Springs, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Nestled in the southwest corner of Colorado Springs lies Skyway Elementary School, the only Title I school in Cheyenne Mountain District 12. For thirteen weeks each spring, students are encouraged to run as many laps on designated courses to reach the goal of 25.2 miles by late May. Those that do, join their peers for the final mile at Cheyenne Mountain High School to complete the 26.2 miles, equaling a marathon. Students who do not finish cheer their classmates on as they make the final four laps and accomplish this goal.

But it's not completing the marathon that is the greatest, noteworthy accomplishment. What makes this annual event so special is the staff and community members that make it happen. Each Tuesday and Thursday morning, Mark Sessions, a physical education teacher, and Mary Whitman, a 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 popsicle sticks to track laps that will equal mileage upon check in.

Mark and Mary are ready and willing to support participants and help them achieve their goals, rain or shine. For the 2017 marathon, they featured children's books each morning and had pictures of book covers in the hallway to encourage reading. "Marathon Mornings" also highlights holidays or other initiatives. For example, one particular morning, Mary's brother and a well-loved former Skyway principal joined students and parents to promote bicycle safety day.

While students, parents, neighbors, and staff run or walk their laps every Tuesday and Thursday morning, visitors are privy to 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, and fun. The purpose has always been, and will always be, to create an occasion where parents can spend a little time, even if only 15 minutes before school, walking with their children and neighbors to get a little closer to accomplishing their goal of finishing their first marathon, hopefully the first of many in their lives.