

Plymouth Christian students use exercise to get their hearts racing in Whittier on Valentine's Day

By Venusse Navid , Whittier Daily News



Luke Moreno pushes classmate Isaac Huerta, both 9, as they exercise during floor scooter relay at Plymouth Christian School in Whittier on Friday, Feb. 14, 2014. The school held the exercise event to promote good health. (Watchara Phomicinda / Staff Photographer)

Plymouth Christian School took the meaning of Valentine's Day to another level by encouraging students to love their bodies, hearts and overall health.

About 180 preschoolers through sixth graders with loads of energy dressed in Plymouth Christian red and took turns at numerous exercise stations on Friday.

Activities varied from hula hooping, jump roping, sprints, scooter racing and tag.

PIH Health representatives offered adult volunteers and parents blood pressure and BMI screenings along with information about Covered California and other resources.

Alex De Leon of Whittier's Back 2 Basics kicked off the two-hour long event with Zumba.

Principal Alex Moreno said instructors explained to students the healthy benefits of exercising, including mood improvement.

Moreno has a background in exercise physiology and is a former PIH Health employee. “Knowing the Type 2 Diabetes and obesity epidemic, it’s important to promote fitness.”

All students were encouraged to participate in the event.

“It’s fun to exercise,” third grader Serena Siordia, 8, said.

Siordia said she plays tag sometimes outside of school to get her exercise.

Sixth grader Jayson Maciel, 12, said his favorite event activity was scooter racing.

“I play basketball outside of school for exercise,” he said.

“We’re very fortunate and this is something the school will carry on for years to come,” Vice Principal and Director of Preschool Marissa Orona said.

Orona said the school has had a health program for about five years and previously had the state’s help with promoting nutrition.

Nancy Aterrado, parent of first grader Marcus Aterrado, said she volunteers because she loves to see the kids so excited.

“They want to participate and are motivated to exercise,” she said. “(Plymouth) is a really good school ... they’re always thinking about the kids.”

“(The students) are soaking it up and enjoying (exercising),” second grade teacher Kyle Thibodeau said. “It’s a fun way to let them know about how to be active at home with their families.”

“The kids love (the event) and look forward to it every year,” Moreno said.

For more information on Plymouth Christian, visit plymouthchristianschool.org.