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LI kids help first lady try to set jumping jack record

Wednesday October 12, 2011 6:28 PM By T.C. McCarthy

Students at the Miller Avenue School in Shoreham join in the nationwide effort to break a Guinness World Record for jumping-jacks. Videojournalist: T.C. McCarthy (Oct. 12, 2011)

Hundreds of Long Island elementary school students attempted to help first lady Michelle Obama set a new Guinness World Record on Wednesday.

The students at Miller Avenue Elementary School did as many jumping jacks as they could for 60 seconds straight as part of Obama's campaign

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to fight childhood obesity.

The first lady kicked off the "Let's Jump" effort Tuesday on the White House's south lawn, along with 450 Washington, D.C.-area students. The record to beat is 20,425 people doing jumping jacks for one minute during the same 24-hour time period, according to Guinness World Record website.

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"One thing that we liked most about this event was that it was a fun and exciting way to promote health and fitness" said Teresa Chambel, a physical education teacher at the school.

Miller Avenue teachers brought each of their second through fifth grade classes down in 10-minute shifts starting at 10:45 a.m.

"They're good cardiovascular activity, they get the heart moving, they get them huffing and puffing a bit," Chambel said. "As I like to tell them if your heart is moving, that means it's happy."

The "Let's Jump" initiative took place between 3 p.m. Tuesday and 3 p.m. Wednesday. Several other Long Island schools participated, including: Sycamore Avenue Elementary School in Bohemia; Barnum Woods Elementary in East Meadow; Lee Road Elementary School in Wantagh.

Guinness stipulated that each participating school had to have independent supervisors, timekeepers and witnesses to verify the record.

"I thought that it was going to be a lot of fun," said Alexandra Sicoli, 10, of Shoreham. "[The best part about it] was everybody coming together to do it."

At Miller Avenue, members of the fitness community volunteered.

John Mahoney and Nancy Kouris, the owners of several local Planet Fitness franchises, along with Cara Kallio, the manager of their Rocky Point location, supervised and timed the more than 400 students while they jumped.

"Even if you just do a little bit every day, it will help give them the tools to keep it in their lives forever," Kallio said. "It's something that you learn young and it becomes a habit. It becomes your life."

National Geographic Kids will post the results of the attempt on its website. It expects to have the results in six to eight weeks.

Pictured above: Second-graders at Middle Avenue Elementary School in Shoreham do jumping jacks for one minute straight to help first lady Michelle Obama in her effort to set a world record for the most people doing jumping jacks in the same time period. (Oct. 12, 2011)

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