

## This Year's Columbia Elementary Runathon – A Runaway Success!

The Columbia Elementary Runathon has been a tradition at the school for many years. Like many traditions, last year it had to be put on hold due to the global pandemic, but this year it was back with a vengeance! While the members of the Columbia Elementary School community have often been generous in supporting the school's chosen charities, this year their generosity outstripped even the school's most wildly optimistic projections.



The school's fundraising goal for the Runathon was \$2,500. As students began bringing in the money they had raised through donations and fundraising efforts, staff quickly began to realize this year's total would far exceed that. When the final school total was counted, the students at Columbia Elementary had in fact raised a total of \$11,447.40 for charity!



Columbia Elementary teacher Judy Schneider and Educational Assistant Alora Campbell organized this year's event. The two educators prepared a video for the school's students, presenting the idea of the Runathon as an opportunity to demonstrate the Successful Learner Trait of compassion, raising funds for members of our community who are less fortunate than we are. The school had selected three community charities for the students to support through this year's runathon, representing the "whole person," including both mental and physical health. The first charity was the Oknakane Friendship Centre, which provides services to indigenous people living in urban areas

of the South Okanagan and Similkameen; the second charity was the Foundry Penticton, which provides health and social services to young people in the South Okanagan dealing with a range of issues including mental health and substance use challenges; and the third charity was the Penticton Salvation Army Food Bank, which wages an ongoing battle against hunger and poverty in our community. Each of these organizations recorded videos for the students, explaining their work and the services they provide.

Students were invited to be strategic in raising money to support them, doing it in a safe and respectful way. Suggestions included

- Seeking donations from family members;
- Donating from students' own savings including birthday money and their piggy banks;
- Doing extra chores for money;
- Sorting bottles and cans; or

- Running a lemonade stand.



Students were encouraged to be industrious in their efforts, and those students who raised more than \$20 were offered the opportunity to take part in a raffle for appreciation gifts.

The Runathon itself took place on Friday, June 4<sup>th</sup>. Each of the school's six learning groups ran for twenty minutes, with some of the grade 5 students running as far as 4 km during that time. Acting principal, Trevor Robinson, ran with each of the groups (a total distance of over 19 km on the day!), encouraging the students in their running, congratulating them on their fundraising efforts and sharing PAC donated freezies with the students.



It wasn't until the next week that it became clear just how successful the students' fundraising efforts had been. First one teacher and then another began to report that individual students in their class had raised more than \$100 and that their class as a whole had raised in excess of \$1,000. As staff talked to each other, estimates for the school total quickly increased from \$2,500 to \$5,000 to \$8,000. However, it wasn't until all the money had been counted on Wednesday, June 9<sup>th</sup> that we realized the students had raised more than \$11,000 (\$11,447.40 to be exact)!

This final total was revealed to students in a virtual assembly held on the afternoon of Thursday, June 10<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Schneider congratulated the school's students for the enthusiasm and industriousness with which they had embraced the goals of the Runathon, and let them know that their hard work and the generosity of the Columbia Elementary Community would enable the school to make a donation of \$5,000 to the Oonakane Friendship Centre, a donation of \$3,500 to the Penticton Salvation Army Food Bank, and a donation of \$2,947.40 to the Foundry Penticton. Finally, students who had raised more than \$20 (a very long list) were invited to select a small appreciation gift in recognition of their efforts.

We are all so proud of our students for the caring they have shown through raising money to support those in need in our community!