

Riwaka students learn that success is a marathon, not a sprint

ELISE VOLLWEILER

After weeks of putting one foot in front of the other, about 100 students from Riwaka School have ticked off a 42km marathon, running laps around their playing field to add to their total.

Nelsonian Rod Dixon is an Olympic medallist and a New York Marathon winner, and his organisation KiDSMARATHON aims to teach children the value of good exercise and nutrition. Riwaka School teacher Krissy O'Donnell says that both the students and teachers were "super keen" to be part of the KiDSMARATHON event, which involves doing laps of a course and recording the cumulative distance over a period of weeks, as well as learning about exercise and nutrition in the classroom.

Their caretaker measured out a course around the field and the 100 participating students calculated how many laps they would need to run to complete a full marathon.

Krissy says that all of the teachers were surprised by

how motivated and eager the students were.

"It was really cool to set up a way to record the laps with each class," she says. "It was also a great opportunity to reinforce mathematics in a real-life context such as using tally marks and working out how many laps they had left to run."

Rod Dixon visited the school last week, spending time talking to the students, making connections with them by chatting about his local upbringing, and empowering them to work towards a goal in small steps. He then joined them for their final laps to tick off the full marathon distance of 42km.

Krissy says it has been great to watch the students reach their goal through their motivation, hard work and dedication.

"It really encapsulates students learning how to look after their hauora [well-being] by moving their bodies and keeping active, working hard towards a goal, challenging themselves mentally and physically and doing it alongside their peers."



A 42km goal has kept Riwaka School students moving over the past few weeks, as they work towards their medals in Rod Dixon's KiDSMARATHON. Photo: Krissy O'Donnell.