

Greenville Journal

Students rescue recess and get walking track

Lake Forest to start school-wide fitness program next year

BY **CINDY LANDRUM**

staff writer

Lake Forest Elementary has slides and swings and playground equipment to climb on.

But the school's older students rarely play on it, said Hannah Brown, the school's PTA president.

"We wanted students to be able to get some exercise," she said. "That's so important."

So parents and school officials decided they wanted to install an asphalt walking track to go around the playground so that the older students would have something to do.

"With the extra focus on testing and the good things academically, we don't put as much focus on the health and physical well-being of students," said Lake Forest parent Annette Fayonsky.

The track would also be a safe place to walk for community members after school hours and during the summer, Brown said.

But the project had a price tag of more than \$20,000, Brown said.

"We thought it would take us five years to raise that kind of money," she said.

But a successful letter-writing campaign by students to the Cartoon Network's "Rescuing Recess Campaign" last year netted the school a \$5,000 grant from the television station, Fayonsky said.

Students at the school wrote more letters than any other school in South Carolina.

"The more opportunity for physical education or physical activity during the day, the better," Fayonsky said.

Fayonsky wrote and received a \$5,000 grant to Lowe's "Toolbox for Education" grant.

A woman who lives in London, England sent a check for \$10,000, said Principal Cindy Coggins. The woman, who wants to remain anonymous, attended Lake Forest



GOING FOR A WALK: Lake Forest Elementary raised \$20,000 for a walking track so that older students at the school would have something to do at recess.

when she lived in Greenville.

The paving company donated another \$1,175 of work, Coggins said.

Coggins said the school will start a physical fitness program in the fall.

Brown said the program will include incentives for students who log a certain number of miles of walking on the track.

"We want to encourage students to keep walking," Brown said.

The track was officially dedicated last week when the school's entire student body cut 1,000-feet of yellow ribbon.

The students then walked four laps around the track to log their first mile.

Contact Cindy Landrum at 679-1237 or clandrums@greenvillejournal.com.