

We're Going Places! | North Hawaii News

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WMS Principal Matt Horne runs with students in last year's fun run/walk. (PHOTO COURTESY OF WMS)

SPECIAL TO NORTH HAWAII NEWS

All of Waimea is invited to participate in Waimea Middle School's 2nd Annual "Take a LAP" Fun Run/Walk at 4 p.m., Friday, Sept. 12. The 1.5-mile keiki- and stroller-friendly walk and 3-mile run/walk will serve a dual purpose: to bring together the entire school community for a fun, healthy activity including dinner, and to help the school buy its own school buses.

Theme of the fun run/walk is: "We're Going Places!" This reflects the WMS' schoolwide commitment made last school year when they received their six-year accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. WMS faculty, staff, families and school partners have committed to continuous academic improvement for all students, and to becoming financially sustainable.

For WMS, sustainability requires reducing expenses and increasing funding because, as a public charter school, the state contributes only about half of what regular DOE schools receive. Also, WMS must pay for busing, food service, electricity and other expenses out of per pupil funds, whereas these expenses are covered by separate funding sources for regular DOE schools.

To tackle one of WMS' biggest annual out-of-pocket expenses, which totaled \$153,000 for student transportation last year, the staff researched alternatives and determined that owning and operating its own buses would save up to \$61,000 annually – money that could be better spent in the classroom supporting student learning. Also, by owning its own buses, WMS would be able to afford more educational excursions and co-curricular programs for students.

Research about the school's student transportation options concluded that WMS should purchase two used, full-sized 72-passenger buses. Total cost including shipping is approximately \$125,000.

WMS jump-started fundraising for buses last May by hosting a family-community steak fry that raised \$750, and also received a \$25,000 "seed money" donation from The Neilan Foundation, and an additional \$2,000 from Windermere Foundation, for a total to date of \$27,750.

To keep up the momentum, WMS' local advisory panel voted to dedicate its 2nd Annual "Take a LAP" Fun Run/Walk to bus fundraising.

The suggested donation to participate in the fun run/walk is \$10 for adults and \$5 for students, with

children under age 8 free. The donation covers a souvenir "We're Going Places!" T-shirt, dinner, awards and door prizes.

The entire community is invited to participate. Registration forms and the 1.5-mile and 3-mile course maps are available on the school's website (www.WaimeaMiddleSchool.org), at www.Facebook.com/WaimeaMiddleSchool, in the office and the registration desk in the cafeteria on the afternoon of the event.

Registration begins at 4 p.m., Friday, Sept. 12, in the school cafeteria. The runners' start will be at 4:45 p.m. and walkers/strollers will head out at 5 p.m. Dinner will be served from 5:30-7 p.m. and include a silent auction, awards program and door prizes.

The Neilan Foundation is underwriting the cost of t-shirts and dinner so all funds raised by the fun run/walk go to the school bus fund.

For more information, call the school office at 887-6090, ext. 222 or if you'd like to volunteer with the fun run, or contribute to the silent auction, please call the school's community liaison Patti Cook at 937-2833.