

Students meeting challenge on diet, exercise



SUSAN TRIPP POLLARD/STAFF

SECOND-GRADER Myana Hollingsworth, 8, goes long for a pass as the Governor's Champion's Tour visits Holbrook Elementary in Concord on Wednesday. CARES after-school programs features students in a variety of fun fitness activities.

■ **CONCORD:** Holbrook Elementary youngsters get athletic reward after eating right, getting more active

By Theresa Harrington
STAFF WRITER

CONCORD — Children at Holbrook Elementary School in Concord are living like champions.

They eat healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables and milk and have pledged to exercise outdoors for 30 to 60 minutes at least three days a week, all as part of the Governor's Challenge competition.

Because of their participation in the fitness routine, the "Live Like a Champion" tour

came to campus Wednesday, giving kindergarten through fifth-grade children in Holbrook's after-school program chances to catch footballs like Jerry Rice, shoot hoops like basketball player Lisa Leslie and boot balls like soccer stars.

Myana Hollingsworth, 8, said she liked the basketball activity best, because it allowed her to jump high into the air while aiming for the basket, knowing she could land safely on a giant inflated air mattress. At home, Myana also stays active.

"I like to go on walks with my grandma," said the third-grader. "And we play tag sometimes."

Nine-year-old Ryan Dickson said he enjoyed the foot-

ball activity, in which kids soared off the ground reaching for footballs, then landed softly on another inflatable mattress. Because he wants to be healthy and fit, Ryan said, he chooses snacks that are good for him.

"I like to eat bananas and strawberries and apples," the fourth-grader said.

Tour organizers said they're on a 16-week blitz across the state that will include activities for the entire Holbrook school Friday, an appearance at AT&T Park in San Francisco on Saturday and activities for the public Sunday at Crissy Field in San Francisco.

"We're focusing on educating the 'tweens' of California

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— the 9- to 12-year-olds — on the importance of health and fitness," said tour manager Jason Esler. "Forty percent of school-age children in California are overweight or obese. And one out of three is unfit."

Holbrook was a finalist in the Governor's Challenge for the 2007-08 school year with 100 percent of its 469 students participating. Among San Francisco Bay Area schools, it finished behind Rancho Las Positas Elementary in Livermore.

The previous year, Holbrook and Stone Valley Middle School

in Alamo were standout schools for fitness, with Holbrook earning \$1,000 for sports equipment.

Louella Giron, who coordinates the school's fitness program, said she signed Holbrook up two years ago, when her then 8-year-old son was very overweight and "borderline diabetic." He lost 38 pounds in six months after starting the fitness challenge, by exercising and changing his diet.

"It really woke him up," Giron said.

Theresa Harrington covers the Mt. Diablo school district. Reach her at 925-945-4764 or tharrington@bayareanews-group.com.