

## SCHOOLS SET SIMON SAYS GUINNESS RECORD

By Katie Anderson • September 24, 2011



School director Marianne Bernardoni (center) leads Goddard School students and teachers in a game of Simon Says on Friday during the Guinness Book of World Records attempt for the largest multi-venue of the game in Lake in the Hills. (Brett Moist – For Shaw Media)

At noon Friday, 60 pre-kindergarten students and 11 of their teachers stood in the sunshine outside The Goddard School with their hands on their heads.

The group was part of an effort among Goddard School locations around the country to beat the world record for the number of people to simultaneously play a game of Simon Says for 10 minutes.

The current record is 12,215 people, set in 2007 at the Utah Summer Games opening ceremony in Cedar City, Utah, according to the Guinness Book of World Records.

“Simon says put your hands on your knees!”

Marianne Bernardoni said exactly at noon.

The director of the Lake in the Hills private school smiled as 71 pairs of hands flew to 71 pairs of knees.

“Bend your knees,” Bernardoni said. Ten players did as they were told and were gently escorted out of the game.

At the same time in Cary, 49 students and 10 teachers were playing, too.

“There are about 400 locations in the country,” said Michele Clark, who owns The Goddard School in Lake in the Hills. “The corporate office was hoping for 100 percent participation.”

The game in Lake in the Hills continued for about nine more minutes until, with 45 seconds to go, four players still were doing what “Simon” said.

Diego Mendez, 4, and his mother, Katherine, both of Huntley; Haeley Surmin, 4, of Carpentersville; and Lachlan Gardon, 5, of Algonquin, remained.

At the 10-minute mark, Gardon, who had participated while sitting in a wheelchair, was the only player left.

Trudy Wakeman, the director of parks and recreation for the village of Lake in the Hills, and Lake in the Hills Police Officer Pete Albanese served as official witnesses for the school. Each had to verify the number of participants and will need to submit statements recounting what each witnessed.

“Activities like this help the children to be active, learn to follow instructions, and to interact with other children and adults,” Wakeman said.