

GODDARD GOES FOR GUINNESS WORLD RECORD IN SIMON SAYS

By Jane Donahue • September 26, 2011



From left to right: Kennedy Harvey Arianna Price and Ahal Vasudevan participate in Goddard School's Simon Says game Friday.
Jane Donahue/For Sun-Times Media/Naperville Sun 20110923 Friday, Naperville

When Simon Says, “Break a world record,” students from two local Goddard Schools responded. On Friday, the Naperville locations joined other Goddard Schools throughout the country in a national attempt to break the Guinness World Record for the largest game of Simon Says in multiple venues.

“Because our learning philosophy is play-based, our corporate office wanted to find something that is both fun and educational that all schools could do collaboratively,” said Tim Lawler, who owns both Naperville facilities with his wife, Dona. “The opportunity arose to have the world’s largest Simon Says game, and the kids have been enjoying the build up to this.”

To break the record, Goddard Schools needed 12,215 participants playing the game at the exact same time. The attempt was supported by more than 370 franchised schools across the nation, and kicked off Friday at noon.

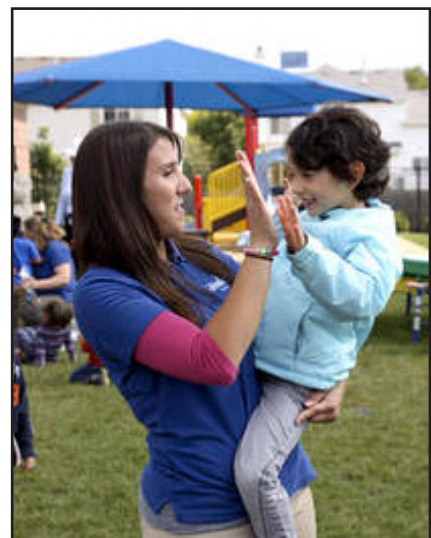
“This activity highlights the power of play and how our children and teachers work together,” Lawler said. “It’s part of our curriculum and the Goddard philosophy that through play children explore and discover the world around them. It really becomes the foundation for learning.”

Valerie Paulsen, director of operations at the Goddard School in Naperville, said while fun, the Simon Says game is also educational. And the game, a far cry from today’s high-tech alternatives, is one parent and child can share.

“We did a lot of different activities this week that led up to the Simon Says event,” Paulsen said. “Games from a long time ago — that our parents played — helps kids make a connection. The kids went home, told their parents about the game, and most parents said ‘I played that as a child.’”

Dona Lawler shared the sentiment.

“All of us, young and older, have great memories of playing the game Simon Says,” she said. “Couple the power of play with a record-breaking attempt, and we have the recipe for a very special day.”



Annabel Sury (right) gets a high-five from teacher Cassie Kalebich (left) after winning the Simon Says game at Goddard School in Naperville.
Jane Donahue/For Sun-Times Media/Naperville Sun 20110923 Friday, Naperville

Tim Lawler agreed.

“I remember playing this when I was a child, and it has been fun to see the kids playing it,” Lawler said. “It helps them learn to listen, follow directions, and work as a team.”

Mayor A. George Pradel attended the game Friday and verified the number of participants for the official record. He said has played Simon Says, but never like this before.

“This reminds me of when I was a cop and we were teaching Safety Town,” the mayor said. “We used to help kids learn how to use hand signals with a game of ‘George Says.’ This brought back good memories for me.”

Aric Henschen, general manager for Republic Services, volunteered to lead the game. Even with some tough commands, the record-breaking event lasted more than 18 minutes.

Four-year-old Annabel Sury was the last student standing.

“I practiced playing Simon Says here and at home,” Sury said. “I’m so excited that I won. It was fun, and I was a good listener.”

At time of press, it was not known if the Goddard Schools succeeded in setting the record.