

# COLUMBIA GODDARD SCHOOLS SET SIGHTS ON SIMON SAYS WORLD RECORDS

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*By Lauren Rosenberg • September 26, 2011*

Two Columbia Goddard schools were part of the first Guinness World Record attempt on Sept. 23 for the number of people simultaneously playing 'Simon Says' in different locations.

"We're encouraged to talk to the families and inform (them) about the different skills the kids will need in the twenty-first century," said Nicole Schwartz, of Clarksville, administrative director at The Goddard School since March, at 8866 Columbia 100 Pkwy., in Columbia. "We're basically celebrating and bringing attention to fitness, nutrition and play because the school's philosophy is about learning through play."

Believe in power of play for learning and providing healthy lifestyle for children.

Schwartz was also charged with leading the calls by being "Simon," but explained the position was more difficult than it sounded due to Guinness' rules.

"I can't repeat the same sequence of calls more than once within any period of 2 minutes; however, individual calls may be repeated immediately, but only one," she said. Additionally, pauses between calls cannot be more than 5 seconds, and she must include one call without "Simon Says" every 30 seconds.

"Heck with the rest of it (the event)," Schwartz said prior to the event on Sept. 14. "I just don't want to screw it up."

Schwartz estimated 75 students participated in the event, held outside in the playground area, that lasted more than 10 minutes. In order to break the record, Goddard needed 12,215 participants playing the game simultaneously at 360 of its franchises nationwide.

"We're hoping to teach them about being part of a huge team and something bigger than themselves," Schwartz said prior to the event. "It's something they'll always remember, and it's a huge example of our philosophy."

She said that during the week leading up to the record-setting attempt, teachers talked about nutrition and fitness in the classroom. The idea for the block party was tied in with First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" campaign.

"It's about not only our philosophy, but helping children stay healthy in the twenty-first century. With the advent of so many television shows, iPhones and video games, it's going to give the children not only a fun time doing it, but giving the parents different ideas and goals for their children," Schwartz said.

The school also had to recruit two "high-standing community members" to act as witnesses to certify their efforts and write down what they see.

In order to break the record, the Goddard schools will need 12,215 participants playing the game at the exact same time.

The Goddard School, at 9100 Quarterstaff Road, in the Columbia village of Hickory Ridge, also participated, but did not return multiple phone call requests for an interview.

The Goddard schools will host a larger block party Oct. 2, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., at Rash Field, located next to the Maryland Science Center, in Baltimore's Inner Harbor. The party is open to the public.