

## 'SIMON SAYS'... POTENTIAL WORLD RECORD



Above: Devynn Whinna (l-r), Lily Van Myers and A.J. Desarno participate in a game of "Simon Says" at the Old Bridge II Goddard School on Englishtown Road Sept. 23. Goddard schools across the nation played simultaneously in an attempt to set the new Guinness World Record for the largest multiple-venue game of "Simon Says." Below: Alexis Vaccaro has fun following directions during the game. PHOTOS BY JEFF GRANIT staff

OLD BRIDGE — It started with standing up, and it may end in a world record.

With Ron Shuali's call of "Simon says stand up" at the stroke of 1 p.m. on Sept. 23, the Old Bridge II Goddard School joined other Goddards across the state and nation in its quest to set the new Guinness World Record for "Largest Game of Simon Says (Multiple Venues)."

At the Englishtown Road school, a total of 103 students, parents and instructors touched their toes, twisted their hips and spelled out Y-M-C-A with their arms in their attempt to break the record, with parent Jessica Harrell of Spotswood coming out the school

champion in a game that lasted just over 12 minutes.

In order to break the record, the Goddard Schools needed 12,216 participants. Witness statements and tickets from each participant were being sent to Goddard and then to Guinness to see if the new record was set.

The "Simon Says" record attempt comes as part of the school's block party celebration, which Old Bridge II Goddard owner Patrice Peschel Keesser said is teaching students and parents to learn through play.

"Learning through play is how young children really learn best, so we want parents to always remember that and to get out and play with their kids," Keesser said.

Playing "Simon Says," Keesser said, teaches the participants, who were ages 2 and up, about following directions, self-regulation, and as a group effort, a bit about teamwork.

Being "Simon," Shua-Life Skills Chief Executive Officer Ron Shuali said, was harder than it looked. To set the world record, Shuali had to follow rigid requirements, such as: "'Simon' must include at least one call without the prefix 'Simon Says' every 30 seconds," and "The pause between calls may not exceed 5 seconds."



And as someone who teaches students about karate, Shuali said he caught himself a few times at the start of the attempt about to call out “sensei says.”

But in the end, Shuali said it was fun, and that is what Keesser said it was all about.

“If we don’t have the record, it’s OK,” Keesser said. “It’s all about having fun.”

