

Students Brave Rain to Cheer on Cross-Country

Traveler

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"Run, Charlie, Run!" could be heard throughout Sidney as ultra-athlete Charlie Engle made his way through the town Wednesday morning.

Engle, a 46 year-old father of two, television and movie producer, world class athlete and recovering drug addict, set out on September 13 from San Francisco, Calif. to break the record for the transcontinental run across America.

He had planned on reaching New York City on October 27, breaking the previous record of 46 days by one day.

Unfortunately for Engle, he suffered an injury in Utah and is no longer able to run.

However, Engle, believing in never giving up, decided to ride a bicycle the rest of the way across the United States.

"I talk all the time in schools and in businesses about adapting to circumstances and for me it felt like I was being forced to listen to my own words for a change," said Engle. "Things change and you just have to keep moving."

Sidney Schools became aware of Engle when Shannon Wehling's special education students read about him in News-2-You; a weekly newspaper designed for special needs students.

Wehling's class first read about Engle's run across the entire Sahara Desert in 2007, and have been following him ever since.

News-2-You provided t-shirts for the entire Sidney Elementary student body and staff. Each t-shirt promoted Engle's personal motto, "do something now."

Engle, who was raised in South Carolina, is currently focusing on raising awareness of childhood obesity along his route across the United States.

"My commitment, especially with the United Way, was to really go across the country talking about youth fitness and childhood obesity," said Engle.

While in Sidney, Engle told the kids that exercise, although not always fun, is very important to stay healthy.

"I think that the kids got so much out of meeting him and spending time with him," said Wehling. "They were inspired to get moving and to make a difference and he gave a great motivational speech to the kids to never give up and just always stick to it and move forward."

Engle's adventures and determination have inspired the elementary students and staff to start a "Walking to Wellness" program under the direction of physical education instructor Donnie Sears.

What was meant to be a quick stop and talk while passing through Sidney, turned into much more. "He was so gracious - he spent extra time and went to every classroom and signed every kids' t-shirt. It was the most awesome thing ever," said Wehling.

Engle's favorite quote is, "To laugh often and much, to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children, to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends, to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others, to leave the world a bit better, whether by a health child, a garden patch...to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded," by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

By this definition, Engle has succeeded and then some.

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