



# Patch

# FURRY CELEBRITY LOOKS FOR FITTEST CITY

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One very furry local celebrity showed up Monday night at Minnetonka Middle School to take a long walk with a group of local kids. Minnesota Twins mascot, T.C. Bear, was in town to jump start the city's Step-To-It Challenge.

Gabriel and Ben Reade, both 10, and their mom, Heather, were among those who also turned out.

"We're doing it as a family," Heather Reade said.

The Step-To-It Challenge is a four-week community initiative aimed at increasing the physical activity of Minnetonka residents. So far, 226 Minnetonka residents have signed up—that's more than double the number who registered last year. City organizers advertise the challenge as, "a fun, free, light-hearted way to connect with family, friends and neighbors, and get moving again after a long winter."



After a quick high-five with T.C. Bear, the Reade boys along with about 100 other students, all outfitted with new water bottles, pedometers and clip-on safety lights that they received as challenge participants, were ready for a walk.

Local challenge coordinator Julie Moore kicked off the contest with just one sentence.

"Does anyone want to walk?" she asked the crowd. A round of cheers echoed in response.

Minnetonka is one of 22 Hennepin County communities taking the challenge—each city competing for the title of most active Twin Cities suburb.

Step-To-It participants keep an ongoing total of the steps they take during the challenge. They can also track activities such as biking, skateboarding, tai chi or even mowing the lawn.

At the end of the program, all this moving will be added up to determine the most active local city.

This is the third year Minnetonka has participated in the program. Although the city has yet to win—in 2010 Minnetonka finished 11th out of 18 cities—the local participants who showed up Monday night seemed more than ready to compete for the title.

Besides bragging rights, the 2011 winning participants from each city will be recognized during a Minnesota Twins baseball game this summer. And according to 4-year-old Minnetonka resident Valerie Keeling, who made sure to spend most of the event within inches of T.C. Bear, that's a prize worth the walk.