



Catalina Channel Swim Will Raise Money for Homeless Students

By Kyla Calvert

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SAN DIEGO — Second and third graders at San Diego's Monarch School for children experiencing homelessness got a visit from International Marathon Swimming Hall of Famer Anne Cleveland Wednesday morning.



Credit: Amalia Bersin

Above: Blair Cannon and Anne Cleveland stand in front of Tara Barrows' second and third graders at the Monarch School to answer their questions about long ocean swims, June 15, 2010.

San Diegan Blair Cannon is training with Cleveland and came to tell students about a swim he's planning to take this August.

"I know that you face some challenges and I think it's great that you're going to school everyday and trying to get good grades," Cannon said. "You've inspired me and Anne has inspired me with some of what she has accomplished and how she has set goals. So I've decided to set a goal for myself. I've decided to swim 21 miles."

Those 21 miles will span the Catalina Channel. Cannon plans to raise \$10,000 for each mile of his swim. The proceeds will be split between the Monarch School and the Great Friends Foundation Scholarship Program for local military families.

The Monarch School's principal, Joel Garcia, said the swim will support counseling, tutoring and the school's library.

"We're grateful for what they're doing for the school and for the students and supporting what we do on an everyday basis," he said. "The mission for us is to provide a rigorous education for the students to break that cycle of homelessness. So it's an honor for us to have Blair coming in and supporting that cause."

Cannon plans to complete the nine to 14-hour swim overnight and without a wetsuit.