

## Kid Triathletes Earn Dollars to Benefit Lexington's Schools



By E. Ashley Rooney

Seventy-four Lexington youth participated in the Kids Triathlon at MIT on Sunday, July 16. Lexington had the second largest team.

After the race, the organizers held a post race party at the Bridge School playground, where those triathletes

Above: Triathlons are one of the fastest-growing sports. Four years ago, only 31 Lexington children participated in this event. That number has grown to 74. *Courtesy of Jessica Qi.*

achieving three and four triathlons in a row were recognized and Lexington Educational Foundation (LEF) received a donation of \$740.

Eight-year old Brandon Xie, a 3 time triathlete, said, he was involved "Because it was fun and good exercise." His mother Vicky, who moved from Shanghai to Lexington 16 years ago, remarked, "I first read about Lexington in my high school textbook and now I am here. Both of my children are involved in this event."

Every triathlon consists of four components: swimming, biking, running and transitions. When asked, the Lexington youth found bicycling to be the most fun. At Kids Triathlon events, kids only race against other kids in their same age group. The program utilizes a time trial start in a pool meaning racers enter the pool one at a time. As they complete their swim, they enter the transition area to don bike helmets and sneakers for the bike portion of the race. After


completing their ride, they reenter transition, drop-off their bike and exit onto the run course. The run is the final portion of the race.

Race distances are set by the USA Triathlon and designed to be challenging, yet achievable – even for



Every school earns a \$10 per participant educational grant to use at their discretion. Here the triathletes are clustered around Kim McCormick, the LEF co-president and Jessie Chen, the race organizer and liaison with the Chinese American League for LEF. *Courtesy of Jessica Qi*

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first-timers. If a child can swim 4 laps in a pool and ride their bike for 20 minutes without stopping, they can successfully complete a kid's triathlon. For ages 6-10: Swim is 100 yards; Bike is 3 miles; Run is 1/2 mile. For ages 11-15: Swim is 200 yards; Bike is 6 miles; Run is 1 mile.

Jody Zhan, age 10, a 4 time triathlete, said, "I do it because my friends are doing it, and it's so much fun!" Most participants in the New England Kids

Everest Yang, age 12, is a 4-times triathlete; his sister Lillian, age 9, is two times triathlete. She said, "I participate because it gives me a lot of exercise." Courtesy of D. Peter Lund



Triathlon are first-time triathletes, though more than 80% of the kids elect to participate again the next year. Twelve year-old Charlie Zhan, a 4 time triathlete, pointed out that this way many kids can help their school earn money to fund new equipment and new programs.



Team members Michelle Wu, Ying Zhan, Katie Chen (from left to right) pictured with Hunter Kemper, a 4x Olympic Triathlete and Shelda Moll, the event organizer. Courtesy of Jessie Zhan.

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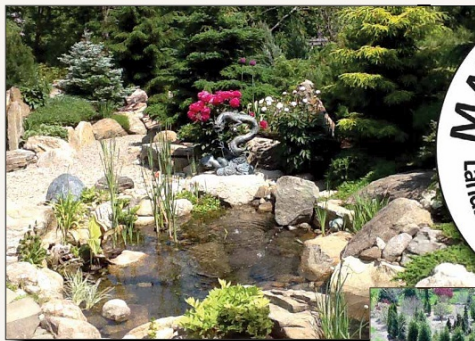
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