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## **Students set record for lining up pennies**

O.C. kids help set world record for longest continuous chain of cents.

By Eugene W. Fields

Children in an after-school program hoped to earn a spot Wednesday in the Guinness Book of World Records for the longest continuous chain of pennies.

And on a track at the Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, they fulfilled their wish.

The 2,000 elementary and middle school students involved with THINK Together, a program with locations at more than 200 school sites in Southern California and 23 sites in Orange County, managed to lay 65 miles of pennies, or 5,491,720 pennies, in a chain on the race track before the sunset ended their efforts.

Nadia Flores, a spokeswoman for THINK Together, said the children collected more than 14 million pennies, the equivalent of about \$146,000, or 173 miles. Flores said the goal was to lay 8,448,800 pennies, or 100 miles, to honor the 100th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's image being featured on the coin.

Amy Nanney, a quality assurance coach with THINK Together, said the group began laying pennies at 10 a.m. but just ran out of time.

"It's a heck of a lot of pennies," Nanney said. "But people tried hard."

The mark of 65 miles still bests the previous mark of 40 miles, held by a youth group in Fort Scott, Kan. Flores said a submission to Guinness has been made.

"You have to fill out an affidavit with two witnesses and submit video or still footage," Flores said.

Flores said the penny drive began in February as an educational activity of the after-school program, which includes more than 500 children and 20 schools in Orange County. The drive was a way to honor the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth and the 100th anniversary of his image on the coin.



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Alfonso Ponce, 13, of Lathrop Intermediate School in Santa Ana helps to place pennies in a grid pattern that will simulate laying the pennies end to end. Santa Ana based Think Together organized the event at the Auto Club Speedway in Fontana.

Even though the group missed its goal of laying 100 miles of pennies, Nanney said the collection drive was a success.

"Everyone is so excited," Nanney said. "They all did a great job."

Flores said the pennies will be donated back to the program.

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