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California students lay 65-mile chain of pennies

- **STORY HIGHLIGHTS**
- Southern California students want to break 40-mile world record set in Kansas
- \$84,500 collected will go to program that provides free after-school care
- More than 2,000 kids lay out loops at speedway track
- Guinness World Records will verify if record was set

By Robin Sidersky

(CNN) -- More than 2,000 students in Southern California laid 65 miles of pennies on a speedway track Thursday in an attempt to set a world record and help schools in the area.

THINK (Teaching, Helping, Inspiring & Nurturing Kids) Together didn't meet its original goal of laying out 100 miles of pennies at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, California, but group spokeswoman Nadia Flores said the group is happy with the results.

"We raised twice what we were able to lay down," she said. "I think the energy and the vibe from having so many kids and volunteers present made it really fun."

Flores said the group ran out of time in its attempt to get all 100 miles laid out, but she added that they're confident they have the record anyway.

Guinness World Records, which would certify the record, said Thursday it had not yet received documentation from the group. The current record for pennies laid out is 40 miles.

The money -- about \$84,500 -- will go to the nonprofit program that provides free after-school care for students at more than 200 elementary and middle schools in at-risk communities in four California counties -- Orange, Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino.

Flores said the idea for "Miles of Change" came after group members saw students at a school in Kansas make a 40-mile chain of pennies in July 2008 to set the world record.

Flores said her group, based in Santa Ana, California, wanted a program that would unite the counties involved -- and set a record.

The pennies were collected by 35,000 students in the after-school program and were laid in loops around the two-mile track in Fontana, California.

Flores said every penny must be touching the next penny in order to qualify for the Guinness world record. Documentation will include aerial photos, she said.

Each student took home tubes to collect the pennies. Students who collected the most got tickets to future Los Angeles Dodgers games, Flores said.

The effort also is meant to honor Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday and the 100th anniversary of the introduction of the Lincoln penny