

## Fleming Middle School opens student fitness center

By Madeline Stone Staff Writer

### PHOTO GALLERY

Students at Lomita's Fleming Middle School are getting a chance to switch up their exercise routines during the regular school day.

The middle school on Monday unveiled its brand-new fitness center, which was made possible by a grant from the Sound Body Sound Mind Foundation.

"These days obesity is a huge problem. Kids need a different outlook on exercise," physical education teacher and department chairwoman Catherine Primosch said. "They think it's boring or they're not motivated."



Sixth grader Grace Paz exercises on one of the fitness center's elliptical machines. (Scott Varley / Staff Photographer)

The fitness center, located in a building formerly used as a dance studio and wood shop, is fully equipped with state-of-the-art exercise equipment, including ellipticals, stationary bikes, weights and jump ropes.

The center is the result of three years of petitioning by Primosch and many of the other PE teachers at Fleming.

"When our principal, Janice Hackett, told me about the grant opportunity, I jumped on it," Primosch said.

Sound Body Sound Mind is a nonprofit organization established in 1999 by businessman Bill Simon and his wife, Cindy. The foundation seeks to

promote self-confidence and healthy lifestyle choices by opening fitness centers like the one at Fleming.

Federal grants and deals with Matrix Fitness Equipment and professional trainers have enabled Sound Body Sound Mind to provide top-notch equipment

and training to local schools.

"We're just now branching out into middle schools," Executive Director Keith Legro said. "We built a curriculum for high schools and adjusted it to middle school body types."

Sound Body Sound Mind has opened fitness centers in high schools and middle schools across the Los Angeles Unified School District and have begun expanding their services to schools in Denver and Dallas. They plan to open their 100th center this fall.

"We've been able to accomplish a lot," Legro said.

The students at Fleming are excited to use the fitness center as part of their usual PE rotation. Some of them came out to show off the new equipment during the ribbon-cutting ceremony Monday afternoon.

"We've been talking about this for three years, so it's exciting for them for it happen," Primosch said.

Sixth-grader Grace Paz, 11, plays baseball and basketball but looks forward to the extra exercise she can now get during the school day.

"It's the best part of the day," Grace said.



Sixth grader Ramiro Equihua, right, exercises on a hand crank machine as classmates use the elliptical machines. (Scott Varley / Staff Photographer)