

# Nitrauer Students To Take Team Spirit To YWCA Race

By Rick Hiduk

**M**ore than 50 Nitrauer Elementary School pupils, as well as faculty members and parents, will participate in the Lancaster YWCA's 12th annual Race Against Racism, which will start in Musser Park, East Chestnut and North Lime streets, Lancaster, at 9 a.m. on Saturday, April 24.

This is the third year that the school has accepted the YW's "team challenge," which has garnered them awards in the past.

"We always have the largest team," said parent volunteer Jennifer Benton-Rowe. "Lots of people are asking about it, so I think that we will have a big team again this year. I'm hoping that it will be even easier this year with online registration."

Separate registration fees have been set for running or walking in the race for adults and for children age 12 and under. Participants who commit prior to Monday, April 12, will receive a discount. For more information or to register, readers may call 393-1735, go online at [www.ywcalancaster.org](http://www.ywcalancaster.org), or e-mail [raceagainstracism@ywcalancaster.org](mailto:raceagainstracism@ywcalancaster.org).

The 5K race will be paired with Humanity Fest, a multicultural food and craft fair that will be held in Musser Park from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. There is no cost for admittance to Humanity Fest, which will feature a variety of ethnic foods, fair trade goods, works of local artisans, and multicultural entertainment.

The YWCA will conduct a fun run for children age 12 and under at 8:30 a.m. Prizes, trophies, and awards will be distributed to winners in more than a dozen age



*Photo by Rick Hiduk*  
Nitrauer Elementary School students (front, from left) Nya Oster, Anya Miller, Zain Bhaila, Sergio Borrero, Nick Oster, Alanso Borrero, and Tahir Bhaila and teachers (back) Millie Sáez, Mike Heverling, Nelson Suárez, and Lizzette Anders encourage organizations to form teams to participate in the YWCA of Lancaster's annual Race Against Racism on Saturday, April 24.

groups, ranging from age 9 and under to age 70 and up. Members of the largest team overall will win free tickets to the Sunday, May 2, Barnstormers game and be recognized between innings - an honor enjoyed by the Nitrauer students last year.

Faculty members related that there are a number of reasons that the event has become popular with the students.

"There are a lot of kids who just like to get outside the school and do something together," stated fifth-grade teacher Nelson Suárez, who noted that the school prides itself on its cultural diversity, and parents from all backgrounds have played a large part in fostering a multicul-

tural spirit at the school by participating in the Race Against Racism and other events that "create a consciousness and awareness" of the value of diversity.

Third-grade Spanish immersion teacher Millie Sáez noted that many of the 2009 race participants were enrolled in the immersion program, which comprises about 20 percent of the student body at Nitrauer.

Nitrauer's participation in the race mirrors the YW's mission to pursue racial justice initiatives, including a school-based anti-bias curriculum for children, study circles that bring together people from diverse backgrounds and viewpoints, and

the three-day Racial Justice Institute at which individuals, business leaders, and members of other community groups can examine the subtle ways racism can permeate society and what can be done to counteract them.

On April 24, many of the Nitrauer pupils will run with parents, teachers, or other adult running buddies. The walkers on the team will meet up with the runners at the finish line for the awards ceremony and to enjoy Humanity Fest, which runs throughout the race. In previous years, Nitrauer participants have donned crazy costumes and decorated a little wagon, in which kindergartners took turns riding.

"We always have fun," said Suárez.