

Pen pals 'run' into each other in chance encounter



Pen pals 'run' into each other in chance encounter. Patricia Razowski, left, and Emilka Lasosta are pen pals from different schools who literally 'ran' into each other for the first time at a school cross-country competition. *Courtesy photo*

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Patricia Razowski and Emilka Lasosta first met through the written word.

Pen pals since September, the Grade 3 girls at two Etobicoke Catholic schools shared much in common - their Polish descent, blond hair and blue eyes.

Not to mention a talent for running.

Running unexpectedly brought the pair face-to-face for the first time Wednesday on the track at Centennial Park.

Patricia was the only girl at St. Louis Catholic School in Mimico, Emilka the only student from St. Mark Catholic School in Humber Bay, to compete in this week's Toronto Catholic school board's elementary cross-country championships.

"When the girls met, they were quite delighted to see each other for the first time," said Pat Ryan, the librarian technician who works at both schools and set up the pen pal program four years ago. "I have a feeling it's a friendship that will last quite some time."

Any butterflies felt over their first meeting didn't interfere with their race. The girls finished mid-pack out of 88 runners.

"Both girls are really strong runners," Ryan said. "They're petite girls, slim, but they've got stamina."

Ryan said the pen pal program develops students' letter-writing skills on a social level. The 35 students learn about one another, share their likes and dislikes, books they've read.

The rest of the pen pals meet for the first time in June at the annual pen pal picnic.