

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Running into resilience

The Alberta Medical Association (AMA) [Youth Run Club](#) was honored to join more than 150 elementary school students in Siksika Nation in October 2019 for a fun run with [Olympic legend Billy Mills](#).

Mills, originally from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, won a gold medal in the 1964 Olympics for the 10,000-meter run. He shared his story of hope and inspiration with the students.

"I'm going to win, though I may not cross the finish line first," was the thought Mills remembered from the final turn of his shocking Olympic victory. To this day, he is the only American to ever win the 10,000-meter race.

The [SN7 program](#), which began in 2015 after a team of Siksika youth travelled to Nike's annual [N7 Summit](#) in the United States, organized the event as one of their many outreach projects in Siksika and across Alberta. SN7 now provides programs both in- and after-school at the [Deerfoot Sportsplex](#).

"Our program is best described as peer-to-peer mentorship," said SN7 coordinator Jody Labelle.

"Sport and activity are powerful tools for supporting mental health and overall well-being. SN7's mentors build relationships and resilience through activity."

"There are good runners here, though running is sometimes overlooked for the main sport of basketball," said Braden ManyBears, an original SN7 member.



Lannie Houle, AMA Youth Run Club Ambassador and 2015 World Indigenous Games silver medalist. (Photo credit: Ever Active Schools)

[Rilee ManyBears](#) is one of those talented runners. He has won gold medals in the [North American Indigenous Games](#) and [World Indigenous Games](#), and he is an [ambassador for the AMA Youth Run Club](#). The program provides coaching and fun run supports for registered clubs, so as an ambassador, Rilee reached out to Billy Mills in hopes that a visit from the Olympian could help students.

In his time with the students, Mills urged them to “take the virtues and values of your culture, tradition, and spirituality and put them into your head, educational systems, and friendships.” While confronting challenges, Mills encouraged the students to “heal and reach the heights of your dreams.”

“Find your dream and share your dream for the betterment of your community and the world.”

[Find out more about the amazing Billy Mills](#)

Banner photo image: L to R: Scott Bailey, Education Coordinator, Ever Active Schools; Billy Mills, 1964 Olympic gold medalist (10,000 meters); Hayley Degaust, Provincial Projects Coordinator, Ever Active Schools. Photo credit: Ever Active Schools.