

today

'KITCHEN CREATIONS'

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Kyle Hu and Eva Clements are just two of the many youngsters expected to participate in the Honolulu Triathlon at Ala Moana Beach Park and Magic Island.

GOOD SPORTS

Two sports-loving 8-year-olds will compete in a kids triathlon for pure pleasure

By Deborah Manog
Special to the Star-Advertiser

A triathlon, known as a sport of grit and endurance, presents a triad of challenges — swimming, biking and running — that can motivate athletes to push themselves beyond their physical and mental comfort zones. For most, the reward is simply finishing.

But for a pair of 8-year-olds, Kyle Hu and Eva Clements, the reward is one that's often overlooked: They do it because it's fun.

Both children are entered in the Kids Triathlon, one of several events featured at the 12th annual Honolulu Triathlon International Festival of Sports on Sunday. It's the second year they've entered the race for triathletes ages 7 to 10 and like any competitor, they're eager and nervous. Kyle worries about his worst event, the swim, while Eva looks forward to her time in the water because it relaxes her.

Athletes ages 7 to 19 have participated in the Honolulu Triathlon for a decade, competing in one of three divisions. The event draws about 100 young triathletes each year. Kyle and Eva are among the youngest competitors in

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Yolanda Wu-Hu
Mother of Kyle Hu, 8

their race, which is held separately from the main triathlon.

The Kids Triathlon starts with a 50-meter swim from Ala Moana Beach Park to Magic Island, which is followed by a one-lap bike ride around the Magic Island parking lot and finally a 1-kilometer run on Magic Island. Most children complete the course in about 30 minutes. Everyone wears helmets and other protective gear.

On a recent afternoon at Magic Island, Yolanda Wu-Hu watched her son zoom around on his bike. This was a natural extension of the Kahala family's love of the outdoors, she said.

"He didn't need any persuasion, it was just kind of like, 'Hey, you want to go swimming at the beach, run around and ride your bike?'" said Wu-Hu, a 43-year-old pediatrician at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children. "At this point it's just fun and it's good because it's setting him up for enjoying the outdoors."

Kyle's younger brother Trevor would like to enter, too, but at 6, he's too young. Next year he plans to race side by side with his big brother.

Kyle, a second-grader at Punahou School who also plays flag football and soccer, probably got the sports bug

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Eva Clements, left, and Kyle Hu, both 8, will compete at Magic Island. They will swim, bike and run, ending at the same finish line as the Honolulu Triathlon.

TRIATHLON: Kids follow in their parents' footsteps

Continued from D1

from his physically active parents. Wu-Hu has completed a triathlon and her husband, Dean Hu, a 46-year-old ophthalmologist at Kaiser Permanente Honolulu, is a triathlete and marathoner.

"Dad's his hero," Wu-Hu said. "He wants to do everything his dad does."

Hu said the Honolulu Triathlon is not limited to hardcore athletes because it's a sport that can be done recreationally. "So it's nice for the kids to get into it starting off like that," he said.

Kyle said he's looking forward to race day. "It's a lot

of fun, lots of kids competing and you get shave ice at the end," he said.

MUCH LIKE Kyle's parents, Eva's parents inspired her with their love of endurance sports.

Eddie Clements, a 31-year-old U.S. Air Force captain, is a seasoned triathlete and marathoner. Liz Clements, a 35-year-old stay-at-home mom, has competed in a triathlon.

One of Eva's most vivid memories is cheering her father near the finish line of the Delaware Marathon when she was 5. Her face lit up as she recalled the moment. Eva's father called out to her and the father-daugh-

ter pair completed the race hand in hand.

"When I saw my dad, I just went through the gate to him," Eva said.

Liz Clements said the couple's four children have witnessed their father's hard training regime for triathlons and marathons.

"Eddie would do long runs, and we've driven out to him and brought him extra water," she said. "The kids are like, 'Yay, Dad,' and it has an effect on the kids. It's exciting!"

The Clements enjoy bike riding near their home at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam and have done a fun run together as a family in Alaska. Eva, a second-grader at Hickam Elementary School, swims, does gymnastics and plays volleyball and soccer. Her triathlon preparation included her own circuit training pro-

gram — riding bikes, running laps around the neighborhood and doing burpees and pushups.

"Instead of going out to play, she'd say, 'I'm going out to train,'" Eddie Clements said.

Honolulu Triathlon director J.J. Johnson said his young competitors do not need special training to complete the race — and that might not work anyway.

"You can't train a kid," he said. "They're just kids; they're just full of energy."

His races stand out because they emphasize family participation.

"Mom or dad does the adult course and the kids can do it, too; they all have the same medal, same T-shirt — it becomes a family affair," he said. "And everybody gets shave ice at the end. That's if I haven't eaten it all."