Written by Carol Pomeday
Wednesday, 27 January 2010 19:26

Runner, speed skater to also announce results of Library of Love effort

Olympians Suzy Favor Hamilton, a seven-time U.S. champion runner and three-time Olympic competitor, and Casey FitzRandolph, a 2006 gold medal Olympic speed skater, will visit Cedar Grove-Belgium Middle School on Thursday, Feb. 25, to encourage students and the community to get physically fit and make healthy choices.

The Olympians will kick off the school's "Movin' and Munchin'" campaign that will run through April.

The public is invited to the kick-off at 1 p.m. in the middle school gym.

Hamilton grew up in Stevens Point and FitzRandoph is from Verona.

The Olympians will also announce the results of the fifth annual "Megan's Library of Love" book drive to help students in a poor Alabama school district start a library.

The book drive was started in 2006 by teachers and classmates of fifth-grader Megan Obbink, who drowned while ice skating in November 2005.

So far, 12,081 books have been sent to students in Louisiana, Alaska, Kansas and West Virginia.

This year, the books will go to the John Essex School District in Demopolis, Ala., where 95% of the students live in poverty.

"This year's goal is to collect 2,919 books to make a grand total of 15,000 books donated in five years," fifth-grade teacher Mary Anderson said.

New books for kindergartners through high school students will be collected from Wednesday, Feb. 3, through Friday, Feb. 12.

A bake sale will be held Thursday, Jan. 28, in the high school commons during the boys' basketball game against Oostburg to raise money for shipping. Students from both school districts have traditionally participated in the book drive.

Donations of books or monetary contributions can be brought or sent to school offices and classrooms or to the Cedar Grove Library, 131 W. Van Altena Ave.

The book drive is linked to the Movin' and Munchin' campaign by awarding students one mile for each healthy choice on the school's journey to Demopolis.

A student who eats two pieces of fruit will earn two miles. Students can also earn miles for family members who make healthy choices.

"Our goal is to earn enough of these miles to reach Demopolis and make the return trip for a total of 1,820 miles," said physical education teacher Terri Albright.

Students will work together in grade-level teams to reach the goal.

Along the journey, they will also learn more about the students in the Alabama school district.