

LOCAL NEWS

New stories updated daily on-line at www.weeklychoice.com

Wertz Warriors at Mancelona Elementary

Wertz Warriors made their way throughout northern Michigan last week, raising money to benefit Special Olympics Michigan (SOMI). One of their annual stops includes Mancelona Elementary School, where students and staff hold fundraisers, collect pennies and have raffles for SOMI.

On Thursday, February 6, fifty Wertz Warriors arrived on snowmobile to spend time with the students and sign autographs. This year, students and staff raised \$2,422.73. Elementary School teacher Lori Gooden said this is the 19th year that the school has supported SOMI. During their 39 years of existence, Wertz Warriors raised more than 11 million dollars to benefit Special Olympics Michigan.



Second grade students in Miss Winslow's class pose with several Wertz Warriors Thursday during their annual visit to Mancelona Elementary School. Retired Detroit Lions football player Luther Bradley (pictured, back row, far right) said this is one of the best experiences he has ever had. "It sure doesn't get any better than this," he said of riding with Wertz Warriors and supporting Special Olympics Michigan. This is his 2nd year with the group. PHOTO BY JOANIE MOORE



Jessica Schaldenbrand, of New Baltimore, signs her autograph for Alyiah Grody (center) and Jasmine Kendall Thursday at Mancelona Elementary School. "I got involved because my Dad is a rider and has been a Wertz Warrior since 1990, and my cousin, Jason, is a Special Olympics athlete," Schaldenbrand said. "I grew up hearing stories of the Warriors going to Opening Ceremonies and giving Athletes rides on the snowmobiles." She added, "it's a lot of time planning and teamwork all year long to make this happen, but the smiles on the Athletes faces makes it all worth it." PHOTO BY JOANIE MOORE