

Red Wings assembly visits Chippewa Valley schools

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Shawnee Elementary School student Zoey Mertz suited up to be a student goalie with help from Jim Biewer, the event and experiential marketing manager with the Red Wings School Assembly Program. Mertz and a few of her fellow students participated in a floor hockey shootout competition against the teachers on Sept. 30.

(Photos by NICOLE TUTTLE)

Shawnee Elementary School student Zoey Mertz had the thrill of hearing the whole school shouting her name on Sept. 30 when she was selected from the crowd of more than 860 students to serve as a goalie in a teachers vs. students floor hockey shootout competition.

Mertz suited up in goalie pads and a mask during the Red Wings School Assembly Program at the Macomb Township school, protecting a goal that was part of the floor hockey equipment donated to the school by the Detroit Red Wings Foundation.

The Red Wings School Assembly Program visits 115 schools per year in the metro Detroit area, Traverse City and Grand Rapids, according to Zach Konnie, an event marketing coordinator with the Red Wings School Assembly Program. Each school receives two full sets of floor hockey equipment complete with hockey sticks and goalie nets courtesy of the Detroit Red Wings Foundation. Konnie, Event and Experiential Marketing Manager Jim Biewer, and Event Marketing Assistant Renee Murry brought the free Red Wings School Assembly Program to Cheyenne Elementary School in Macomb Township, as well as Shawnee, on Sept. 30.

Shawnee Elementary School second-grade teacher Christina Brewington said that as a Red Wings season ticket holder, she was eager to bring the assembly to Shawnee.

“We tried to have them come last year, but they were already booked. They book up super fast,” Brewington said.

The school assembly program began in 2010 and was designed to introduce children to the sport of hockey and

encourage an active and healthy lifestyle. At one point during the Shawnee assembly, students had the opportunity to practice doing jumping jacks, toe touches and other exercises. Brewington said that the program reinforces how students exercise in gym class.

“The assembly is based on the importance of education and a healthy lifestyle,” Brewington said.

On Sept. 30, Konnie, Biewer and Murry encouraged students to eat healthy, set goals, focus on education and learn to embrace each other’s differences. Biewer explained to students that the Red Wings hockey team is made up of players from all over the world.

“They love that they are so different from each other. They take all these things that they have learned from all over the world and they bring them to Joe Louis Arena, and it makes them a much better hockey team... Just because somebody at your school may be a little different from you, do not call them names, do not put them down, but learn from that person. If you can do that it will make you here at Shawnee a much smarter school. Just as it makes our Red Wings players a much better hockey team on the ice,” Biewer said.

Shawnee Elementary School students also had the chance to answer Red Wings trivia correctly for prizes, and watch a floor hockey shootout between teachers and selected students. Brewington said that many of her second grade students are knowledgeable about both the game of hockey and the Red Wings.

“They are very into it. I have some huge hockey fans. I have students who play also. So they were very excited to hear that something that is sponsored by the Red Wings was coming to our school,” Brewington said.

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