



FITCHBURG PRIDE

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28 PAGES
2 SECTIONS

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NEIGHBORHOODS



3

H.M. Francis leaves another mark on city

YOUR CITY



7

Life lessons from around the world

TEAM FITCHBURG



10

St. B's falls to Oakmont

BOOMTIME



12

Spring into the Senior Center

INSIDE

- Schools 2
- Neighborhoods 3
- Your City 5, 7
- Opinion 4
- Public Safety 6
- Calendar 9
- Team Fitchburg . . .10-11
- Boomtime 12
- Obituaries14-15
- Classifieds C1-C12

A in math, B in science, F in BMI?

By CAITLYN KELLEHER
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those results. "It's the next step to ongoing communication with families and physician offices, and the overall

than one-third of all middle school and high schools students in Massachusetts are considered either overweight or obese.

ally and tracking growth patterns over time can help make sure a child is achieving or maintaining a healthy weight. A single BMI-for-age calculation is not enough to evaluate long-term weight status because height and weight change with growth.

"Their physicians are also documenting these things," Sharkey said.

Rivers said if a parent wants to have a physician measure the child's BMI, and submit that information to the school, this can replace having the screening at school. Parents who do not want their child screened at school can

Continued on page 13

During the upcoming school year, the Massachusetts Public Health Council will require all public schools to regularly perform Body Mass Index (BMI) screenings on students and to notify parents four times during a student's 13 years of schooling.

The new regulations require nurses in public schools to perform a BMI screening for all children during the first, fourth, seventh and tenth grades. Each child's BMI result will be provided to parents along with background information to help them understand how to interpret

health care of students," said Pam Rivers, nurse leader for Fitchburg Public Schools. "Health care is extremely important so they (students) are in a place so they can succeed."

Recent data shows that more

"You're seeing more of Type 2 diabetes in the younger children," said Marcia Sharkey, nurse leader in the Ashburnham-Westminster schools.

The federal agency recommends that BMI-for-age is checked annu-



PRIDE PHOTOS/KAREN MANN

Special Olympics soars to greater heights

Athletes and volunteers compete in the School Day games at Elliot Field

By TOMMY BOUDREAU
PRIDE INTERN

Despite the dreary, chilly, morning, the Special Olympics North Central School Day Games started off with a bang, literally. A gunshot began the events, ranging from the 100-meter dash to unified shot put. Students from North Central Mass. schools attended this event, which was held at Fitchburg State College's Elliot Field last week.

Each participating school was introduced individually as its members walked along the track in groups. Soon after each school was announced, Mayor Lisa Wong took the stage with an encouraging speech for the athletes. She got the crowd pumped up for the upcoming

events.

Heather Root, a special needs teacher at Fitchburg High School has been in charge of Fitchburg's athletes for the past six years, and has been working with special needs students for over seventeen.

"It's great when you see the general education kids participate, it's a great community activity, and it also helps encourage kids to get out and exercise," said Root

Each school had volunteers pair up with the athletes and compete in the events along with

HENRY HIKES TO THE RABBIT HOLE



D.B. Johnson, author of the local favorite "Henry Hikes to Fitchburg" shows Delaney and Derek how to draw his character Henry. Johnson visited The Rabbit Hole last weekend to read, draw, and speak with children at the bookstore.

PRIDE PHOTO/CHARLES STERNAIMOLO

them.

Throughout the day, all over the field, kids were smiling. Everyone was overflowing with excitement to compete. FHS junior Quy Tran was one of the most determined athletes at the Special Olympics.

"I'm very excited, this is my third year at the Special Olympics and we kick butts," said Tran.

Tran had already competed in the 100-meter dash and was proudly wearing his gold medal.

Continued on page 16



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