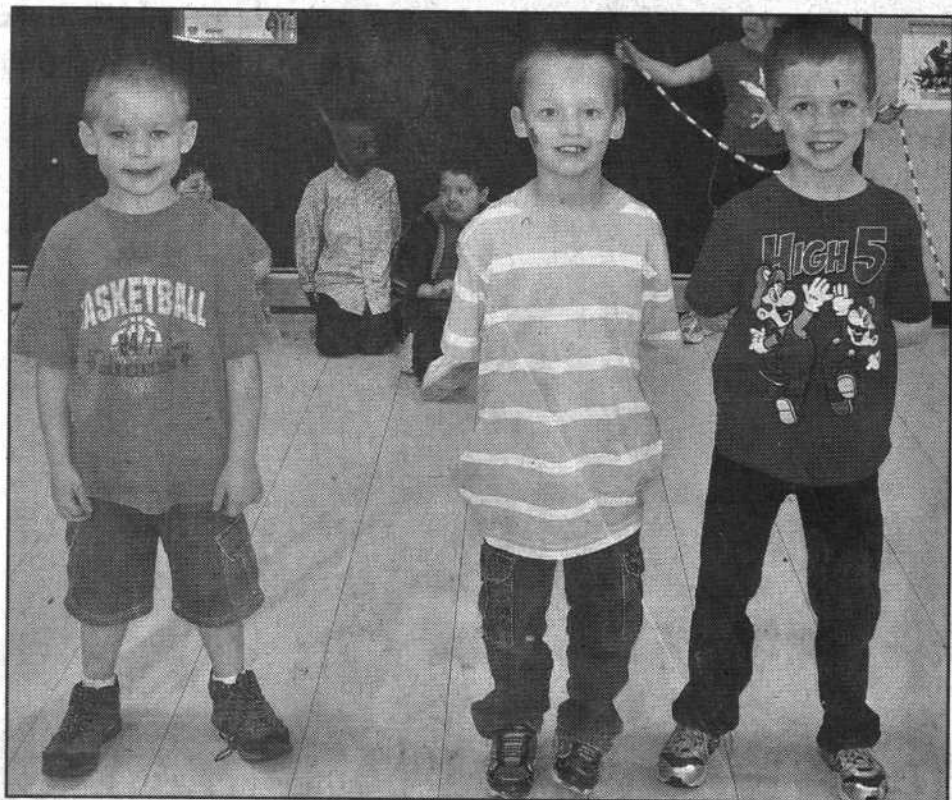


MORE LOCAL NEWS



Submitted photo
James Ragan, Zachary Todd,
and Garrett Mims, from left
to right, paced the Jump
Rope for Heart event at
Garrison-Pilcher Elementary
School.

Garrison-Pilcher students jump for American Heart Association

Staff report

On Feb. 25, a gym full of Garrison-Pilcher's students stayed after school to participate in the American Heart Association's Jump Rope for Heart.

PE coach Veletta Reed said this is the school's 21st year participating in Jump Rope for Heart.

Jump Rope for Heart is a fun event for students to jump rope, learn about the heart and how to keep it healthy. It raises money for the American Heart Association, too.

Reed said, "With childhood obesity on the rise, and with it the risk of heart disease, our students are not only raising money to help those who have heart disease now, but they are exercising and gaining knowledge in how to prevent heart disease in their own lives. We have two goals — to raise money for the American Heart Association, but also to educate and provide life skills for our students who are our future."

Reed shared that Garrison-Pilcher students had raised \$5,691.97 for the American Heart Association.

"That is the second-highest amount we've ever raised in the 21 years we've been doing this," said Reed.

The money raised is used in researching cures for heart disease.

The top fund raiser for this year was

first grader James Ragan, who raised \$575. According to Reed, he had special help from his mom.

Reed explained, "James' mother is a soldier in Saudi Arabia, and she and her fellow troops helped in raising this money for James to participate in the Jump Rope for Heart event."

Reed was especially impressed that James' mother is not just fighting for our freedom, but while overseas serving our country she is also helping with the fight to cure heart disease.

Also, Reed remembers that years ago, James' uncle was the top fund raiser for Garrison-Pilcher's Jump Rope for Heart — a family affair for the Ragans.

The next-highest fund raiser was second-grader Zachary Todd who raised \$500.

Reed described the special significance of this student's participation.

"Zach actually has heart disease himself. He was born with HLHS, or Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome, meaning the left aorta, aortic valve, left ventricle, and mitral valve are underdeveloped. The cause is unknown but requires surgeries to repair and correct. This is Zach's second year helping us raise money. Last year he was actually the top fund raiser. He and his family truly understand the importance of what we're doing."

The third-highest fund raiser was first-grader Garrett Mims, who raised \$420.