



THU., DEC 11, 2008

# Wisconsin State Journal

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THU., DEC 13, 2007 - 2:51 PM

### Olympians win kudos for school program

Two years ago, WEA Trust in Madison decided to promote healthy eating and exercise among the public school employees it insures, as well as those districts' students. But public relations manager **Steve Lyons** admits there was virtually no money to do it.



BILL REIN

Casey FitzRandolph and Suzy Favor Hamilton, pictured at the Movin' and Munchin' event in Appleton, won the top award from the Department of Public Instruction for events that go into the schools.

Undeterred, Lyons asked two famous Olympians from Wisconsin for help, and he ended up getting speedskater **Casey FitzRandolph** and runner **Suzy Favor Hamilton** on board for the Movin' and Munchin' program.

"We wanted to go into schools to promote eating right and healthy lifestyles and we had no budget so we had to ask them to do it for the good of the cause," says Lyons. "We were amazed because right away both said yes."

He says FitzRandolph and Favor Hamilton had never met, but when they got up on stage together, "they were kind of like an old married couple. They have a great rapport."

Their program begins by dimming the lights to show their highlight films. Then the Olympic theme music starts, and as the lights come on, FitzRandolph and Favor Hamilton enter from the back, high-fiving the kids as they run forward.

Lyons says Favor Hamilton even tells the story of her "greatest moment in elementary school." She was barred from running with the boys and when she was finally allowed to do so, she beat them all.

Most of the talk, says Lyons, focuses on "little things people can do for their health, like eating vegetables and fruits."

FitzRandolph and Favor Hamilton have done the program twice, and last week they won the top award from the Department of Public Instruction for events that go into the schools. Lyons credits the athletes.

"Casey and Suzy are some of the most humble people I've met in my life and they are like that all the time — on and off stage."

#### Top hero picked

*Beliefnet.com* picked Virginia Tech professor **Liviu Librescu** as its Most Inspiring Person of 2007 after he won online voting by a landslide.

He was selected ahead of Wisconsin's **Maj. Scott Southworth**, whose story of adopting an Iraqi orphan with cerebral palsy whom he met while serving in Iraq was featured in this space.

Librescu, a Holocaust survivor, died putting himself between his students and shooter **Seung-Hui Cho**.

#### Writers' strike hits home

You might recall reading here about University Theatre director **Tony Simotes** helping ABC News stage a filming for Primetime's "What Would You Do?" hidden-camera series last May.

The show captures reactions people have when confronted with dilemmas — in this case, it was teenage violence against

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the homeless and Simotes is an expert at choreographing stage fights.

The show was originally set to air last month, but you didn't miss it.

"Even on the local level the writers' strike is having an impact," Simotes says.

"They still hope to air it but plan on a tentative date in January. I guess it's all the lead-in material that surrounds the segment that needs the writers."

#### Talk radio changes

**Sheryl Gasser** started at Wisconsin Public Radio 11 years ago as a production assistant. Recently, she was named director of talk programming, responsible for selecting and scheduling WPR's statewide talk programs.

Gasser replaces **Joy Cardin**, who had been doing double-duty, also working as a morning talk-show host. She will focus on her on-air work.

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