



Here you are: Paws with a Cause assistance dog Gilda delivers a check for \$3,000 to the non-profit organization's Leann Kesler during a recent assembly at Our Lady of Sorrows School in Farmington. Pictured are some of the students who contributed.

Partners from page A3

lines of communication about how we can get involved."

Room for everybody

Lipin emphasized that the program's existing corporate liaisons with Target, Sam's Club and Kroger won't be jeopardized because of the arrival of Meijer, a Midwestern chain of 160 stores headquartered in Grand Rapids. Such stores help the afternoon program, open to all middle school students in the Farmington district, by providing a wide

variety of supplies, including snacks, beverages and recreational games. The program is operated at the Farmington Hills Ice Arena, YMCA, Warner Middle School and William Costick Activities Center.

"We're just adding another great partner," said Lipin, who has led the program since it was launched out of the Costick Center in 1996. "It's great to have Meijer on board. There's plenty of room to have everybody working together."

Because Meijer carries a family philosophy, having been founded by Fred Meijer, the concept of helping kids and families is a natural one, as far as Massey is concerned.

It is not coincidental that his name tag featured "Mike" in large letters while the letters of "Massey" are much-less prominently displayed.

"Everybody here is on a first-name basis," he said. "Even when Fred visits here, it's 'Fred' and not 'Mr. Meijer.'"

Sorrows students chip in for Paws dog

BY TIM SMITH
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Going to the dogs is a good thing, as students from Our Lady of Sorrows School are finding out.

A number of students chipped in \$1 a piece to buy "dog licenses" for stuffed animals, to contribute toward helping Sorrows parent Yvonne Hengereau receive an assistance dog from Paws with a Cause.

At a recent assembly, a check for \$3,000 was presented from the private Farmington Catholic school to Leann Kesler of Paws with a Cause. They also saw Paws dogs such as Gilda, Popal and Data show what they do to come to the aid of the humans they serve.

Gilda, a golden retriever, is Kesler's canine helper. At the assembly, Gilda zig-zagged around the gymnasium floor, picking up a purse, spice jar and

other items "dropped" by Kesler, who was diagnosed with a rare form of muscular dystrophy during her childhood.

"Retrieving is 75 percent of what Gilda does. She picks up what I drop," explained Kesler.

'Retrieving is 75 percent of what Gilda does. She picks up what I drop.'

Leann Kesler
—Paws with a Cause

"She's very persistent and never rolls her eyes."

Kesler said that what the animal has done for her is help her regain her independence. And that's one of the main reasons Hengereau was looking forward to receiving her assistance dog, Tyme, on Monday, March 19.

"My dog is going to help me retrieve things, open doors and also give Melanie, my daughter,

a chance to not have to pick up things for me anymore," said Hengereau, who is handicapped by polymyositis, an autoimmune disease of the muscles.

After the assembly, sixth graders Lauren Phillips, Mandy Rabbitt, Liz Ratloff, Alyssa Risk and Courtney Vanantwerp said seeing how Paws dogs do their stuff to help others was a wonderful experience.

"I think what they do for the people is nice, and it can help them a lot," Mandy said. "And if I was a person with a disability, I'd like one (a dog) like that."

Liz was thrilled to see the things that Gilda, hearing dog Popal and black lab Data can do. "If they can train these dogs to do this to help people, that makes the world a better place."

Leading the fund-raiser were student council advisers Rachel Damuth, Susan McNichols and Nora Miller.

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