

SISU SKI FEST GIVES TO GOGEBIC-IRON RANGE YOUTH CROSS-COUNTRY SKI PROGRAM

NEW XC SKIS FOR LOCAL YOUTH

Ironwood, Michigan - Pam Kauppila and Morgan Grasso, SISU Ski Fest board members, present a check for \$2,000 to Paulette Niemi, Coordinator of the Gogebic-Iron Range Youth Cross Country Ski Program.

Second grade students from Sleight school show off the new Atomic cross-country skis that were recently purchased thanks to the SISU Ski Fest. Niemi noted that the ski lesson program will begin its fourth year and has grown to include second grade youth from Ironwood, Hurley, and Wakefield-Marenisco schools. In the past 3 years, over 200 youth have learned how to cross country ski thanks to the generosity of SISU Ski Fest, Atomic Ski Corp, who provides cross country skis at cost, ABR and Wolverine Ski Trails, who provide free use of their trail systems for lessons, and the many volunteers who teach the lessons. "It has been fun and rewarding to see this program grow and to be able to share my love of skiing with the youth," said Niemi. "The kids pick up the sport very quickly. It is a healthy and fun way to enjoy the outdoors in the winter," she added. The ski lessons will start at the beginning of January. They are offered to second grade students in conjunction with the local schools. Students who participate in the Gogebic-Iron Range Ski Program will also have the opportunity to compete in the fun SISU Lapset Loppet on Friday, Jan 13th, as part of SISU Ski Festival weekend. Niemi, who is coordinating the Lapset Loppet, encourages youth 5-10 years old to participate in the free, untimed ski race starting at 1:00 PM at ABR Trails in Ironwood. All participants will receive finisher medals and free hot chocolate and cookies. The Lapset Loppet is sponsored by River Valley Bank.

If you would like more information to register a child for this event, please visit the SISU Ski Fest website www.sisuskifest.com.

If you are interested in volunteering at the event, please call 715-254-4104. Volunteers are needed to assist with registration, ski outfitting and to help on the race course.

###

For more information about this race or to schedule an interview with Geneva Smiles, Race Director, or Paulette Niemi, please call Sandy Sharp, Race Administrator at 906-364-1296 or email Sandy at raceadministrator@sisuskifest.com

