

## FEATURE

*Essay winner, school awarded mini-Olympic games*

Maggie Gould, 13, laughs as she is pushed on a luge-type sled by Kathleen Sciole, a representative of Olympic Regional Development Authority.

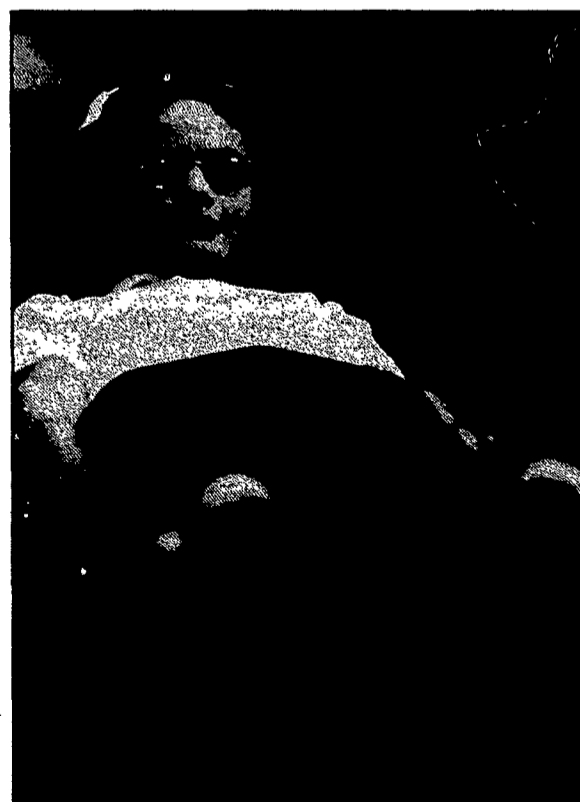
Lieutenant Governor Mary O. Donohue and state Lottery Director Margaret DeFrancisco visited Our Lady of Mercy High School Feb. 6 to honor eighth-grader Mari Figueiredo as one of 10 winners out of 5,600 entrants throughout the state in the "Winter Achiever" competition. The four-year-old essay competition asks students in grades six through eight to explain how sports have helped them become better people and excel in other areas of their lives. Mari received a laptop computer and printer, a "Winter Achievers" running suit, plaque, medal and a trip for her and her family to the 2002 Empire State Winter Games in Lake Placid, where Mari and the other winners will be recognized. In conjunction with the award presentation, officials from the Olympic Regional Development Authority presented a sports clinic that enabled Mercy students to shoot pucks as in Olympic ice hockey and to be pushed on sleds over a track simulating a luge competition. Mercy High School also will receive a \$1,000 computer package later in the school year.



Winter Achievers essay-contest winner Mari Figueiredo, 13, shoots a hockey puck into a machine that measures the puck's speed.



Christie Gattelaro, 12, talks with Olympic Regional Development Authority representative Kevin Birchenough before taking her luge ride.



Eighth-grader Leah Taity, 13, tries out the luge.

PHOTOS BY ANDREA DIXON