



Inside •
Hospice volunteer training set for March
Page 9A

IDAHO'S OLDEST WEEKLY NEWSPAPER
SINCE 1886

In Sports •
Bulldogs claim consolation title
Page 1B



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Devon Barker explains the feel of a river ride by rocking the kayak for fifth-grade student Chazton Stokes. FREE PRESS/LORIE PALMER

Just do it

Champion 'dares' kids to choose an activity for life

By LORIE PALMER
IDAHO COUNTY FREE PRESS

GRANGEVILLE — "Oh! Wow! That's awesome!" echoes a class of fifth graders as they watch a DVD of Devon Barker twirling and spinning in her kayak.

Barker spoke to Grangeville Elementary Middle School fifth and sixth graders about Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) and, most importantly, how to "find an activity you love — and do it."

Barker, of McCall, is a two-time national champion in freestyle kayaking and a world champion surf kayaker who spreads her "Dare to Kayak" message throughout Idaho.

"You have to find something that is productive rather than self-destructive," Barker told students. "For me, kayaking keeps my mind and body so occupied I do not have time to do participate in self-destructive activities such as drugs or alcohol."

When asked to come up with acronyms or describing words/sentences for "DARE," many of the kids responded.

See DARE, Page 3A

DARE: 'Allow yourself to have free time'

Continued from Page 1A

"Dare to dream," said Delaney Adams.

"Allow yourself to have free time," Katie Hauger said.

"Resist drugs," said Brandon Smith.

"Everyone can win," stated Kara Reilly.

Barker asked students to come up with plans for activities within their lives that will keep their minds and

bodies consumed with thoughts and actions to achieve greatness.

"Sports are great and for me it's kayaking, but it can also be about playing a musical instrument or photography or painting — anything that keeps you actively engaged," she explained.

Barker left the students with her

own definition of DARE:

Dare to be who you want to be
Always do an activity you love
Risk losing so you can reach your goals

Everything can be achieved with hard work, determination, clear vision and a deep down drive which says, "you can do it!"