

## Milford's Unified Basketball team combats stereotypes

On Feb. 12, the entire student body of Milford High School crowded into the gymnasium to watch the annual in-school Unified Basketball game against ConVal.

The Milford Spartans wrapped up their season on a high, winning 36-30 over the ConVal Cougars. The crowd of students was enthralled and energetic, cheering equally for both teams. The atmosphere was overwhelmingly supportive.

Unified Basketball has been a part of the high school since 2013, giving young people with intellectual disabilities a chance to be a part of the big game.

The Milford Unified players were very excited about the final score.

"I played for the winning team," said Unified player **Jacob Wilson**.

**Joey Mikula**, another Unified player, said he was very excited to have "made a lot of baskets."

The Unified team even got the chance to perform during the halftime show.

"I was a part of the Hexatonics, who

sang 'Let's Get It Started' for the halftime show," said Unified player **Florina Putney**. The a cappella group got the entire crowd clapping along.

Unified Basketball is a sport with a powerful message. Unified sports and Special Olympics promote social inclusion and fight stereotypes.

Many students might not get the chance to play sports at the varsity level. Unified Basketball gives these students the opportunity to shoot some hoops and learn about the camaraderie of a team sport. The sports program gives a mentally handicapped player a partner without an intellectual disability to create a friendly and fun climate.

This year, the climate in the packed gymnasium was remarkably spirited. The players always look forward to the big in-school game, and the high school staff and students enjoy being a part of the energetic atmosphere.

Jeremy Wisbey is a senior at Milford High School.



**JEREMY WISBEY**

Milford High School



Milford High School students take part in the annual in-school Unified Basketball game against ConVal on Feb. 12. The Spartans won 36-30.

Courtesy photo by **JEAN LOCICERO SHANKLE**

