warrant in Batavia by city police and the
residents were charged Feb. 18.

Le Roy embraces anti-bullying campaign

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LE ROY — Parents, teachers and community members joined together for the “kick-off” of the anti-bullying campaign at Wolcott Street Elementary School Monday night.

“It’s a community-wide problem, so the solution should include everyone,” explained Casey Kosior, principal at WSS. “Usually in a bullying situation, most people address the bully and the victim, but we’ve learned that it is the bystanders who have the most power to stop it from getting out of hand.”

The school has implemented the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, or OBPP. With OBPP, adults are trained to spot bullies and how to respond to their behavior appropriately. Everyone from bus drivers and cafeteria workers to teachers and parents are trained with someone from OBPP once the program is initiated.

Kate Cross attended the event with her 6-year-old daughter, Madison Masters.

“I’m here because I want to be aware and be supportive,” Cross said. She has already explained to her first-grader that bullies are people who hurt feelings, and they usually end up with no friends.

The Le Roy Federal Credit Union sponsored keynote speaker Jim Jordan. Although Jordan isn’t a representative of OBPP, he commended Le Roy for embracing the program.

Monday night, Jordan spoke to a large audience that filled just less than half the auditorium. In attendance were concerned parents, siblings, and other LeRoyans.

“Boys are much easier to spot,” he said. “They push. They poke. You can physically see them misbehaving.”

Girls, Jordan said, are much sneaker with their forms of bullying.

“Girls will exclude, ridicule, gossip and lie about other girls,” he explained. “Tell them you will be checking up on them and once they demonstrate to you that they behave responsibly on the Internet, you can give them more freedom.”

Jordan also said that children should not be allowed to have multiple screen names or alias e-mails that would allow them to say something hurtful without repercussions under the blanket of anonymity.

School teachers from WSS told parents about a survey students had filled out that demonstrated an overwhelming response from kids who wanted to do something about bullies, but didn’t know how.

“With OBPP, we are learning how to give our kids the tools to take a stand for themselves,” explained Carol Messura, vice principal at WSS.

WSS has placed three “report boxes” throughout the school where students can fill out a form and slip it into the box to report bullying behavior. Once a bully is reported, teachers and staff can be on special alert with regards to that particular student.

If three reports are turned in about one student, a phone call will be made home to his or her parents and disciplinary measures will most likely be taken.

Parents were also encouraged to keep in close contact with teachers if they feel their child is being bullied.

The event ended with grateful parents thanking Jordan and Kosior for taking a serious stance on bullying. Planning for next year’s kick-off event is already in motion.