

## VIPS Mentors And Students To Meet Patriots

By BRENT RUNYON

Three New England Patriots players were scheduled to visit Morse Pond Elementary School on Jones Road this morning as part of a program to celebrate volunteerism in schools.

Patriots wide receivers Deion Branch and Julian Edelman and running back BenJarvus Green-Ellis were to arrive at the school at about 10:30 this morning to meet the 22 Morse Pond students in the Falmouth Volunteers in Public Schools program, and the adults who mentor them.

The Patriots players were to coach teams of students and their mentors in an interactive obstacle course challenge and share personal stories about mentors who made a difference in their lives.

The event puts a spotlight on the Falmouth Volunteers in Public Schools, the program that matches adult volunteers with students who need a positive adult influence in their lives. There are 75 students and 65 mentors in the program.

The Patriots' visit will be one of the most high profile events in Falmouth VIPS history, said Director Tracey I. Crago.

"We got a call about two weeks ago, and we were thrilled," Ms. Crago said. Falmouth was chosen because it is a partner member in Mass Mentor Partnership, a statewide organization for youth mentoring. Falmouth is the only stop on Cape Cod for the Patriots players.

Morse Pond Principal Andrea B. Schwamb said yesterday that she was trying to keep the Patriots players' visit a secret, because the other students at the school will probably not get to meet the players.

The students in the mentor program were told only that there would be special guests and they should not miss school today.

"We're just telling them that

it's really important that they show up," said Ms. Schwamb. "We're just going to try and keep it fairly low-key."

Morse Pond School was chosen because the 22 students in the program comprise the largest number in any Falmouth school.

Morse Pond guidance counselors refer many of the students, Ms. Schwamb said, and the Morse Pond students are open to participating in the program.

"The whole idea is to inspire the kids and help them," Ms. Schwamb said. "If we just keep that in mind as we move forward, it usually works."

Even though the Patriots are not scheduled to meet the other students, Ms. Schwamb said she may ask them if they would like to walk through the cafeteria at the end of their visit.

"I'm excited that we were given this opportunity," said Ms. Schwamb. She said she has already decided not to mention the Patriots' 34-31 loss to the Buffalo Bills on Sunday afternoon.

Scheduling the event was complicated by the fact that today is a half-day of school because of a teachers' in-service.

The visit was arranged by the New England Patriots Charitable Foundation as part of a season-long initiative to celebrate volunteerism in honor of Patriots owner Myra Kraft's lifetime commitment to philanthropy and charitable service. Ms. Kraft, a summer resident of Mashpee, died of cancer this summer.

