

# School News

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## Extraordinary Inspiration from Snowman

Do you know the saying “Why be ordinary, when you can be extraordinary”? Well, it’s true. And the inspirational story about Snowman, in the book *Eighty Dollar Champion*, is a good reminder that each of us has the ability to be extraordinary.

In 1956 Harry deLeyer, a riding instructor for a girls’ school in Long Island, New York, arrived late to a horse auction and came across a plow horse headed to the slaughterhouse. Harry saw that despite the poor treatment by his previous owners and his shabby looks, the horse’s strong stance and gaze conveyed he was ready to trust. Harry could tell that the horse was wise with a good demeanor which seemed to cover hidden depths. So, Harry bought the horse, Snowman, for \$80.

Snowman was a calm, steady horse which was great for the girls learning to ride, and he thrived on the deLeyer farm. However, Harry, a recent Dutch immigrant with a growing family, needed thoroughbreds that could be trained and sold as show horses for more money, so he reluctantly sold Snowman to a neighboring farm. Yet, Snowman kept escaping back to the deLeyer farm, even with an old heavy tire weighing him down and five-foot-high fences in his path. This was surprising as Snowman had not shown potential as a jumper in previous riding lessons. However, Snowman proved through his many brave escapes that he could jump, and he had an undeniable bond with Harry.

Harry decided to buy Snowman back from his neighbor and put him into show jumping training. Harry and Snowman competed in shows where the wealthy showed their expensive thoroughbreds. At these shows Harry and Snowman were laughed at until Snowman began to win against the top horses and ultimately became a two-time National Horse Show champion and was recognized in the Show Jumping Hall of Fame in 1992.

As the book highlights, “Harry and Snowman showed everyone how extraordinary the most ordinary among us can be.” Harry saw the jumping quality in Snowman and then helped develop his talent and skill. Harry and Snowman both put in hard work and dedication to win against what seemed to be extraordinary odds. Snowman was an ordinary horse with an extraordinary talent.

The story of Snowman teaches us that even though we may consider ourselves to be ordinary, we each have extraordinary talents. It could be our ability to sing, dance, play a sport, analyze numbers, lead a group, or even care for others. And like Snowman, a champion lives in each one of us. Find your extraordinary quality and let it shine through to make this a better world!