

# The Gazette

## Hawthorne Lincoln Middle School students clean up Eight Acres Woods

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BY KRISTIE CATTAFI  
STAFF WRITER  
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Lincoln Middle School seventh-grade students participated in a day of service on Sept. 12 by cleaning Eight Acres Woods as part of the 9/12 Generation Project.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIA TOSCHI

Lincoln Middle School students helped clean up Eight Acres Woods as part of the 9/12

The 9/12 Generation Project, is a national service-learning project that teaches students about the terroristic attacks that occurred on Sept. 11, 2001 through kind acts performed on Sept. 12, explained Mia Toschi, co-director of the 9/12 Generation Project.

Each Sept. 11, students watch the 9/12 Generation Project's educational film and discuss the events. As part of the film schools are encouraged to start their service-learning projects on Sept. 12. The Lincoln Middle School students helped clean up the woods by Diamond Bridge and Bamford avenues. Hawthorne's Department of Public Works also provided the students with gloves, rakes and other supplies as part of the community cleanup.

Sixth-grade teacher Leslie Clark described the 9/12 Generation Project as a group that looks at tragedies like Sept. 11 and other natural disasters like hurricanes and tornados and looks at the perspective of the heroes that came to help and came out of those events.

"It's about how young adults can turn tragedy into an opportunity to help in our community," Clark said. "Today's middle school students weren't born when 9/11 happened so it's important to teach them about the tragedy and how all these people came to help."

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Clark said they took it as a teaching opportunity of how the students can help in their community, school or other natural disasters that affect people.

With the cooperation of the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission, the 41 seventh-grade students went to the area that needed cleaning and worked for an hour. Clark said as part of the student's curriculum, the commission came to the school and did a presentation last spring.

"It made a lot of sense to do something that was part of the curriculum and be part of a service project that extends into the classroom," Clark said. "The kids had a good feeling of accomplishment when they were done and that was the point."

Toschi said since many of the students have no memory of 9/11 its part of the 912 Project is to teach students about the tragedies through educational videos and performing kind acts on Sept. 12 to "pay it forward."

"As horrible as 9/11 was, it is just as important remembering the history of 9/12 – the day the world came together. People came from across the country to help New York heal. Others stood on line to give their own blood. Donations poured in. It was the best and worst of times," Toschi said.

Clark said it is important to teach that instead of just feeling like we have no recourse and should just be scared we should act by helping others.

"A lot of people are sad on 9/12. We are replacing the sadness with happiness by helping others," seventh-grade student Logan Simgh said.

The 912 Generation Project was launched in 2012 and has signed up more than 1,000 schools and 500,000 students. This was Hawthorne's first year participating in the event. Clark said the school plans on participating again next year and with hopefully an entire grade and then eventually getting the entire school involved.

Email: [cattafi@northjersey.com](mailto:cattafi@northjersey.com)

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