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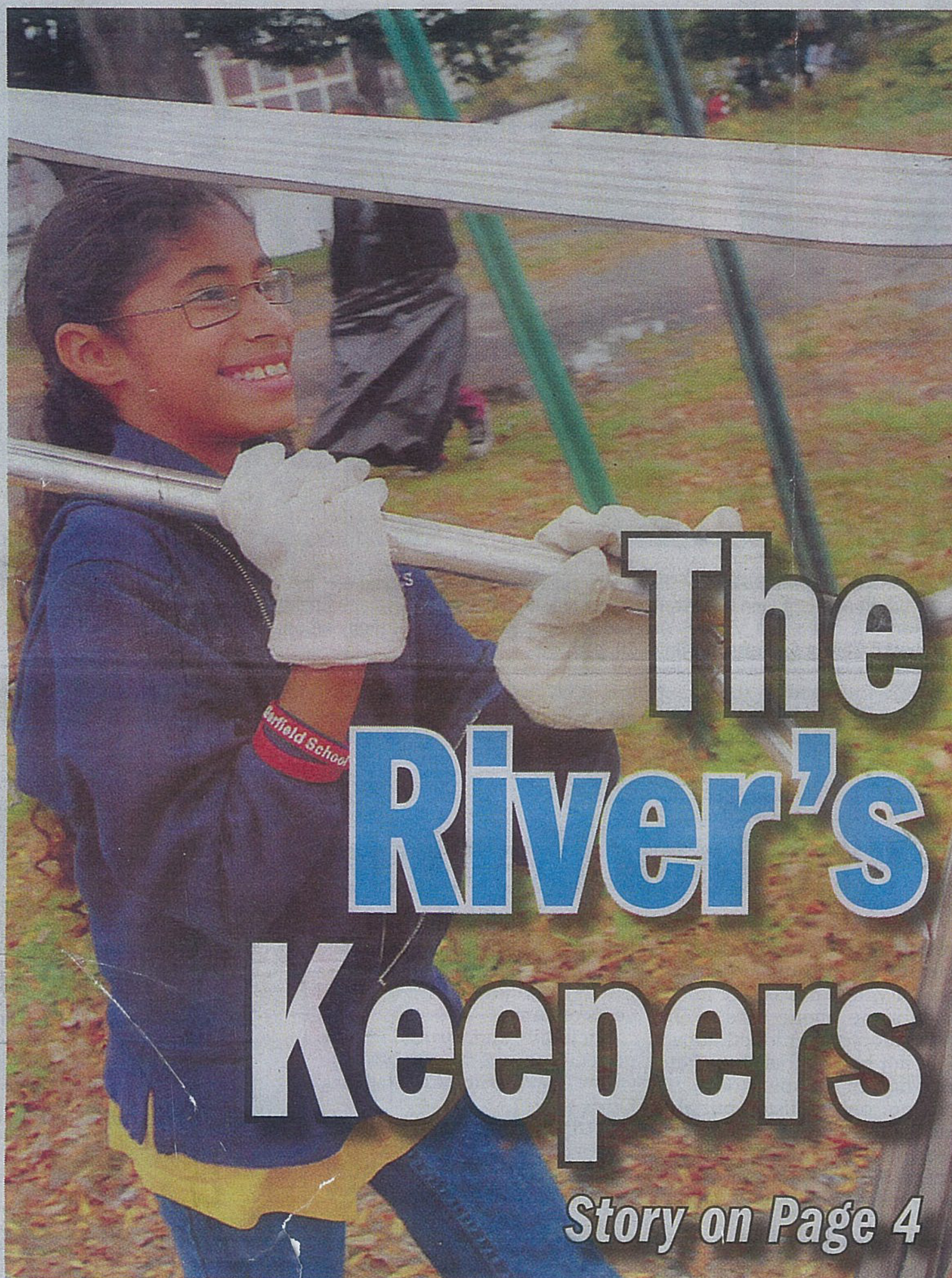
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The Passaic River — moving in a clean direction

By **RENATA MAGALHAES**
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

They might not be able to drive hybrid cars or install solar panels on their homes, but it doesn't mean they don't care about Mother Earth.

A group of fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade students at Garfield School were shown on Oct. 26th just how important it is for them to keep their bubblegum wrappers off the streets. And it's not just for esthetics.

The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners put together an hour-long presentation about the importance using garbage cans and reminded the kids to appreciate the local Passaic River.

Chris Brooks, program coordinator and Kearny local, said it's important to get kids involved. He said that pollution is an issue and the younger you start educating, the better.

"Kids nowadays think it's cool the 'think green,' but that's really starting with this generation," Brooks said.

According to Brooks, older generations don't see things quite the same way and it's evident by what ends up in the river.



GARFIELD school students dump debris they picked up at the Frank Vincent Marina Park by the Passaic River in Kearny during a clean-up session led by the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners (PVSC) Pollution Prevention Educational Outreach Program on Oct. 26th.

REENA ROSE SIBAYAN JOURNAL PHOTOS

"You name it, it's in there," said Brooks about the debris in the Passaic. "People also still go to small wooded areas and

dispose of construction waste and stuff like that," he said. "Of course we can't expect volunteers to get the big stuff like the refrigerators, but they definitely can help."

Also helping Brooks with the presentation was River Restoration Outreach Coordinator, Matt Krone. He showed the children a slide show of pictures of the all the "goodies" removed from the river.

"About 400 tires were in the Passaic," said Krone, causing the kids to gasp at idea of all this stuff floating around. "And we have a 52-foot skimmer (boat) that catches floating

garbage and it has collected about 70,000 pounds of litter from the river."

The efforts of the commis-



GARFIELD school students and guidance counselor Bob Wasilak remove garbage from the Passaic River during clean-up session with PVSC.

**SLIDESHOW
ON NJ.COM**

See and hear the Garfield School students' clean-up project in a special audio slideshow.

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sioners and crews that constantly clean up the river are having a great affect and it shows in the wildlife.

"The Red Tailed Hawk, which has been on the endangered list, is finally coming back to the area," said Krone. So are the Snowy Egret and the Osprey.

Brooks hopes that the commissions efforts will also lead to the advancement of plans for a canoe and kayak trail along the river.

"The idea is to build places for people to be able to safely put canoes into the river," he said.

The Passaic River is already used by the town's high school crew teams.

The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners operates one of the largest plants in the state and services 48 municipalities in Hudson, Essex, Bergen and Passaic counties.