

Dobbs Ferry School District

"Inside Edition" on Education




Dobbs Ferry Middle School 8th graders in the Friends of Rachel (FOR) Club are building bridges with the community's senior citizens...literally. Fifteen FOR Club members visited the Embassy Community Center this past week for lunch and to work on an architectural project with the local senior citizens group as part of an ongoing inter-generational series bridging the generation gap.

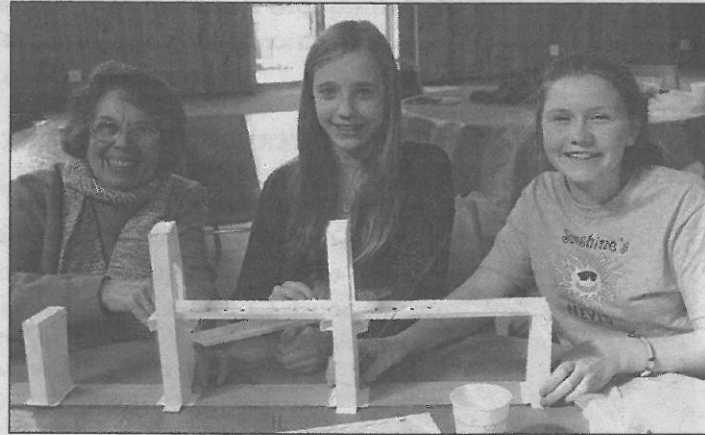
To kick off the program, both students and seniors were treated to an informative 45-minute presentation on The New NY Bridge www.NewNYBridge.com (aka Tappan Zee Bridge) conducted by Governor Andrew Cuomo's community outreach team which provided wonderful insights into how bridges are built and the different types of structures. A brief question and answer period followed the slide show and presentation. Subsequently each table, comprised of FOR Club members and seniors, worked together to construct their own bridge model of a Cable-Stayed (Harp) Bridge. The building project was a big hit with every age group!

"We have scheduled 6-8 different events during the school year for 6th, 7th and 8th grade FOR members with the Embassy Center seniors," said Dobbs Ferry Middle School Counselor and 6th/8th grade FOR advisor Rose Mittan. The School District coordinated the architectural project with Senior Citizens Advocate Abby Connett and the Arch For Kids organization www.archforkids.com through Dobbs Ferry parents Kathryn Slocum and Karen Orloff. Arch For Kids teaches young people academic content through neighborhood investigation and building projects.

According to Middle School Counselor and 7th grade FOR Club advisor Sandra Hacker, the 7th grade is scheduled to have a bingo and games day with the

Embassy Community Center seniors at the end of March, plus they will also get together again for Zumba in April. The 6th grade FOR Club will help with the preparation for senior citizens week in May, and all the Middle School FOR clubs will hold a joint ice cream social (egg creams and memories) with seniors at the end of the school year.

FOR was formed by the family of 17-year-old Rachel Scott who was the first person killed at Columbine High School on April 20, 1999. The purpose of the club is to start a chain reaction of kindness and to create a positive environment for students, teaching them to have empathy and concern for others. "Kids can be apprehensive about talking to people other than their peers," said Ms. Mittan, "but through collective conversation and activities the students come away feeling overjoyed that they can connect with the seniors citizens and find commonalities and share fun experiences." said Ms. Mittan. 



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