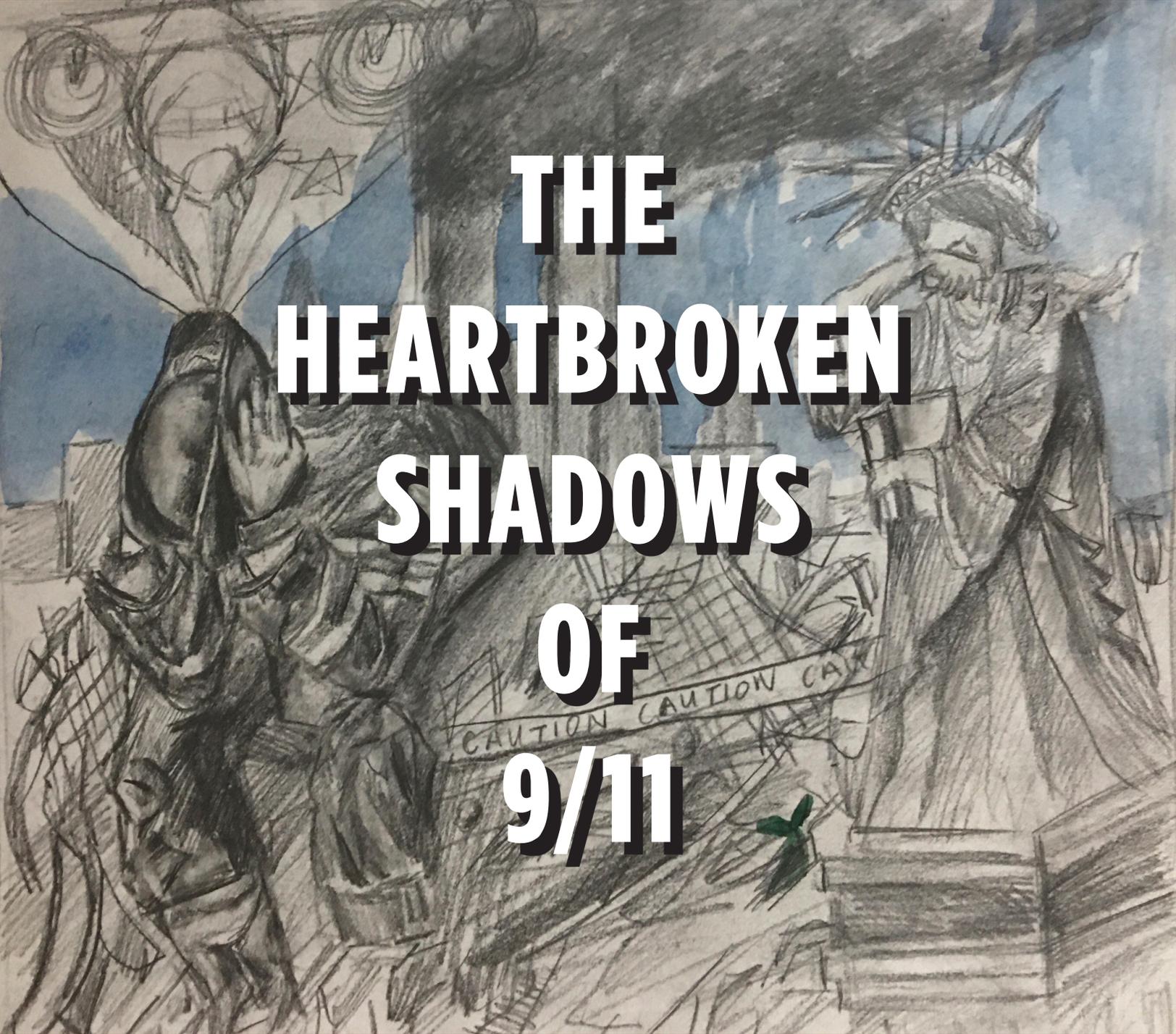




9/11 Ditmas 20th Anniversary Commemorative Project

62kids911project.com



THE HEARTBROKEN SHADOWS OF 9/11

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9/11 20th Anniversary Commemorative Creator & Director
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Table of Contents

Meaning Behind the Cover	3
Foreword	4
Introduction by Student Leaders	8
Oral Histories	12
Student Creations	32
Ceremony 2021	42
9/11 Commemorative Curriculum	48
Articles	58
Student Leader Bios	70

Meaning Behind the Cover

The Title

I came up with the title, "*Heartbroken Shadows*", because it explains how people felt during the event. It shows how people were heartbroken about what happened. I felt that that was a good representation of that.

Keny Ryan Jean

The Image

My message that I want to get across to the viewers is that there is still hope in the debris of the collapse of the Twin Towers.

The hope is represented by the little plant that has grown from the rubble. I wanted to capture the joy that brought to people when they saw this plant. I did that by adding color to the plant. I wanted to show how there was still hope.

The sky is also in color to show how it was just another normal day when all this went down. The other parts of the drawing as you can see are in black and white, showing that this was a depressing and devastating event.

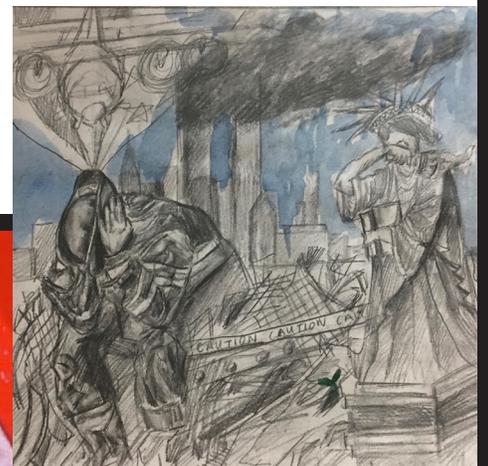
In the left corner of the drawing, you can see that there is a firefighter. You can see this firefighter is very dejected and sorrowful as the Twin Towers in the back get hit by the hijackers.

I drew the Statue Of Liberty crying to really show how everyone was melancholy as the Twin Towers collapsed. The Twin Towers represented hope in America. Now it's gone. After both towers fell down it left rubble and debris. This was shown at the bottom of the drawing.

The mood I wanted to share was a positive mood. Yes, this drawing may seem very gloomy, but if you look closely there is that little plant growing from the debris. This is hope.

This plant grew into a tree in the end. :)

Vivian Chen



A Backward 9/11 Glance Forward for 21st C. Digital Citizen Students: Stepping Up to Social Responsibility

by Dr. Rose Reissman

As Digital Citizenship finally gains prominence in educating our young citizens, teachers are eager to connect this initiative with ongoing mandated curricula and skills. A study of immediate history events - such as 9/11 - accesses student learners to real Digital Citizenship while also authenticating mandated CCSS Language Arts (interviewing, reading, writing, researching, knowledge) and Social Studies (inquiry, primary source, secondary source, evidence based documents) skills. Students get the opportunity to immediately interview readily primary source witnesses to an event- their own family members. These interviews engage students in an oral tradition of family learning. As students record - using pen, recorders, flipgrid, video - these interviews, they work as active Digital Citizens. The products they produce - the interviews with pictures - and the uploading of these products to the project website - provide students with needed agency and self-efficacy. Finally they craft their own commemorative ceremony for 9/11 from the unique perspective of middle school students, not family members or survivors or first responders. Students step up to the first of many social responsibility roles. In their recording the ceremonies with these completed - filmed ceremonies - being uploaded to their project website - <https://sites.google.com/ititmas.org/911-20-years-later/home>, they become curators and creators of a viable digital citizenship artifact. Unlike the majority of school projects, the students' backward glance forward project work was not only done for a teacher and a specific project grade, but rather to be readily accessible to invited adult viewers and the school community. Another dimension of the project is a partnership with the Pennsylvania Council for Social Studies <https://pcssonline.org/pcss-9-11-twentieth-anniversary-project/>. This amplifies student agency as their work is being shared immediately with peers in Pennsylvania schools, particularly those in Bucks county who share geography through the Garden of Reflection for the Bucks County victims from the Towers and Flights 93 and 175 <https://www.9-11memorialgarden.org/9-11-bucks-county-victims/>.

How can students immediately go backward in immediate history to go forward as active digital citizens?

First, they are pre-surveyed on the extent to which they can relate to any event that happened before they were born? If yes, why and if no, why not?

They are also surveyed for any prior knowledge of lessons past about the event such as 9/11 and how they acquired that knowledge. The pre-survey will of course be revisited at the end of the project so the students have a sense of agency and of ownership of the knowledge acquired and the attitudes toward immediate history shaped.



Next the students view the HBO documentary What happened on 9/11 - <https://www.hbo.com/documentaries/what-happened-on-september-11>.

This documentary, which deliberately frames a visit to the 9/11 memorial through the eyes of a diverse student class, immediately immerses the student citizens in the experience of learning about 9/11 through the museum curated memorial lens. The students can focus on how the various diverse peers react to and discuss seeing the charred artifacts of uniforms, shoes, phones and other debris of the Towers. Most importantly, the student audience for the video shares the oral history of the Tower Project Manager who details how he escaped the North Tower before it fell. Many of the questions for him raised by the students resonate with the students in the audience. The students are also moved by seeing the filmed class creating freestyle art - pictures, tower builds, sculpture and diy art representing the charred remains of the tower as well as visualizations of the tree.

Inspired by the documentary, students get the opportunity to produce an artistic product - a trifold poster, a painting on canvas, a foil/pipe-cleaner rendering of a 9/11 graphic, or a multimedia construct representing 9/11 or a 9/11 rebuild message. These artifacts are filmed for a project in progress video and become part of an online gallery as well as a standing exhibit for the 9/11 project.

Students also use the documentary as a springboard for their family oral history interviews. These done at home with an emotionally connected personality truly “realizes” the immediate history event of 9/11 for the students. They share the details of the history their parents gave as well as the geography of where in NYC or the world their family member was 20 years ago - which included Japan, Nicaragua , Mexico, Pakistan, Uzbek and other US cities. The students also identify key quotes made by their subjects plus new insights from these quotes. Among these are the aftermath of Muslim per said hatred and bias as an outcome of the attack. The oral histories shared online through the website spark student poster art, original art, and reflections.

Finally as a culmination to the project, students create from their own emotions, research, family oral histories and artistic talents - a ceremony commemorating those lost on 9/11 2001 from the perspective of those born after 2008. This ceremony, which includes original songs, artwork, and statements about why Patriot Day needs to continue to be commemorated as years pass, represents 21st century middle school students now “stepping” up to socially responsible leadership as productive citizenship services and artifacts producers. By glancing backward at 9/11 2001, our students can continue forward as digital leaders present.

A Special Message from David Keller Trevaskis

As a past two-time President of the Pennsylvania Social Studies Council and a celebrated civic educator working for the Pennsylvania Bar Association, I was delighted to observe the development of the 9/11 Twentieth Anniversary Commemorative Project at Ditmas from its creative inception to its launch. I am inspired by the work already shared by your students. I look forward to thousands of Pennsylvania students and educators partnering with the team leading the project at your school in the months leading up to the 20th anniversary of that event, what we now celebrate as Patriot Day

I am so impressed by how, despite the challenges of remote, hybrid and live teaching, your school, Ditmas Educational Complex Intermediate School 62, has managed to get a few hundred grade 6 to 8 students across the spectrum of special needs, ESL, regular and enriched classes to research and report about 9/11. Dr. Rose Reissman and I have worked together over three decades and we have often pursued partnerships that benefit young people working with both of us. Exchanges like ours require many things to work but they can only happen with the support of effective and efficient educational leaders. Thank you for all you have done to support the project.

Dr. Reissman regularly updates me on how the project is progressing at Ditmas, sharing student led oral histories, recorded Ditmas family remembrances, related digital media, and student designed artwork. PCSS will roll out the project across Pennsylvania in May and then connect with Ditmas at the start of the 2021-22 school year in final preparation for the anniversary celebration. This is not the first collaboration between Ditmas and the Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies. What I have seen over the years at Ditmas, from visiting the school in 2013 to planning for the current 9/11 project, stands out as the best of American education. Part of that is having great teachers--when I visited your school in 2013, teachers Michael Downes, Angelo Carideo and Amanda Xavier were leading student-centered projects. That they are now piloting this effort speaks to their talent and commitment. It also speaks so well of your leadership of a school already steeped in PBIS and anti-bullying themes. It would be easy for educators to shy away from special projects in the age of the virus, but everyone seems to be working that extra bit. Incredible work is



being accomplished. Talent teachers are developing music and vocals and student leaders are collaborating remotely to design the ultimate ceremony.

I am a public interest lawyer with the Pennsylvania Bar Association and a longtime educator in the field of law-related and civic learning. I have worked with thousands of young people and adults in a variety of settings for the past 40 years promoting education about the core values of our representative democracy. I firmly believe that great administrators make for great schools and I believe the initial success of this collaboration shows that you for that bill. You as a principal able to make certain this project runs smoothly online and, in the classroom, demonstrates truly authentic digital citizenship and strong administrative leadership in a time when many administrators are just focused on opening schools or monitoring remote learning.

I salute you as a much-needed administrator advocating for project based learning, civic education and ceremonies, promoting the important attitudes, skills and knowledge needed to do this work.

Best wishes, stay well and keep safe!

Sincerely yours,

David Keller Trevaskis, Esquire

Pro Bono Coordinator

Legal Services

Pennsylvania Bar Association

Executive Director of the Law, Education and PEACE for Kids

Executive Secretary, Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies

Introduction

by Student Leaders

My name is Nurzahan Chowdhury, and I am a student leader on this 9/11 project. 9/11 is an event that not many people know about, or even desire to know about. I'll admit, I was one of those people who hadn't known anything about this event. I wasn't very curious when I first heard about it. But, during the 7th grade, I learned something that really moved me to learn more. I learned about the hate, and discrimination towards people like me, (Muslims). I couldn't wrap my head around as to why anyone would be negative about a certain religion, because one person following that religion did something terrible. Solving the source of this negativity about the Muslim religion made me look into what's happening today, noticing so many "hating a certain group" similarities.

The events of 9/11 are something that we can all learn from, in multiple ways! Sure you can pick up a book, placing it in your lap, moving your eyes swiftly from word to word. But, that's not the only way to learn about it. If it were, I wouldn't be where I am today. You can learn about 9/11 using your ears! Listen to what others have to say, or listen to what kids today love, music. Music is constantly evolving, but it has always had a reason behind it, an explanation. I myself wrote a song about 9/11, and it was a pretty catchy song. Another way to learn about is through art. Just search up 9/11 art on Google, and a vast variety of artwork will show. They each are complex, or simple, but have a thousand words of emotions, history, and voices inside of them.

After learning about 9/11, I expanded my comfort zone for knowledge and research. As you read this compilation of work by Ditmas students, you too will grow as researchers and as caring citizens.

Nurzahan Chowdhury



Hello! My name is Yessy Pena. I am 13 years old, and currently attend Ditmas Junior High School as a 7th grade student. Due to Covid, I am fully remote but that hasn't stopped me from contributing to the 9/11 project! So far I have been sharing my ideas and perspectives about 9/11 through many different ways. I have also worked on my leadership skills and have been able to interpret many other people's perspectives on the particular topic. Moving into the specific topic of leadership itself, I interpret it as something very important. Luckily for me, I have had many great leaders in the past and still continue to. In fact, our leader for the 9/11 project is great herself! She, and many other people, have taught me the aspects of leadership that make an impact, especially a positive one. Leadership is also a trait I developed from a very young age, so I've always been exposed to it. Throughout the years, I have learned many of the dos and don'ts when it comes to leadership, and it has helped me become a better leader. This will also be very important in the future because I love contributing to many projects and showing my care about them. For instance, I plan on continuing my contribution within the 9/11 project. Being clear on what my interpretation of what leadership is will really make an impact for me and many others. Overall, I am excited to continue this project and show my involvement in what has to come!

Yessy Peña



Student Leaders

Nurzahan Chowdhury
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Neshita Debi
Medula Hassan
Keny Ryan Jean
Asher Loeb
Anika Manchandani
Ras Bakari Murphy
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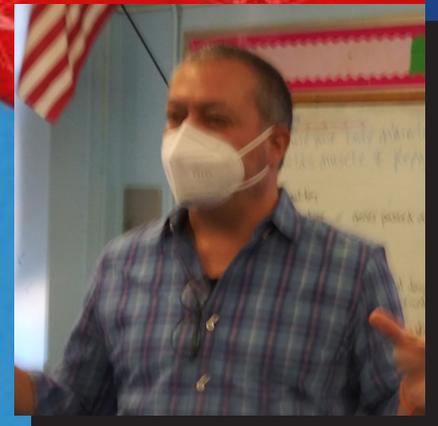
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Denis Nolan

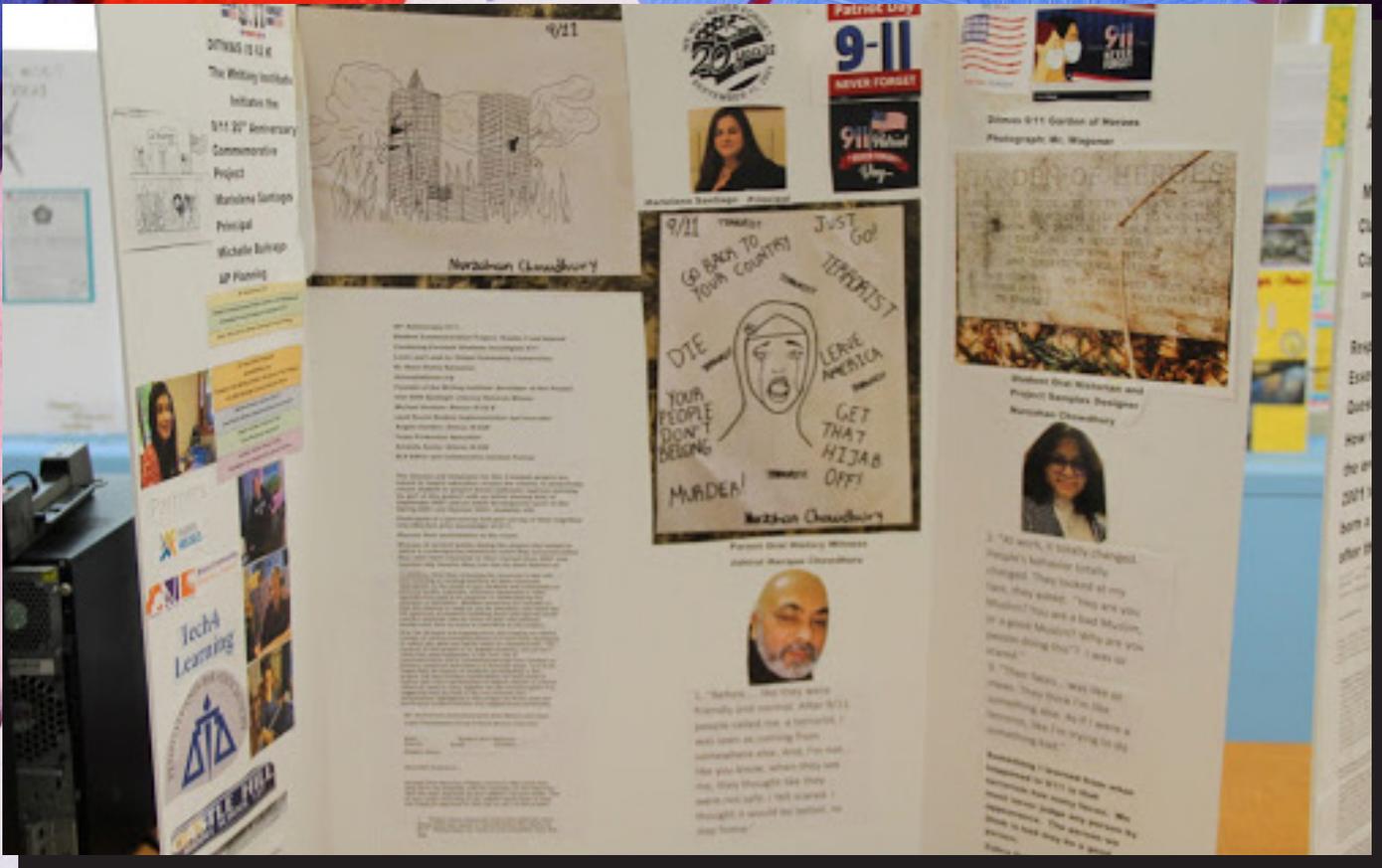
Missy Schiro

Mr. Rabinowitz



ORAL HISTORIES

Ditmas Families serve as primary sources for 9/11 2001 experience





Interviewer: Nurzahan Chowdhury

Interviewee: Jahirul Haque Chowdhury

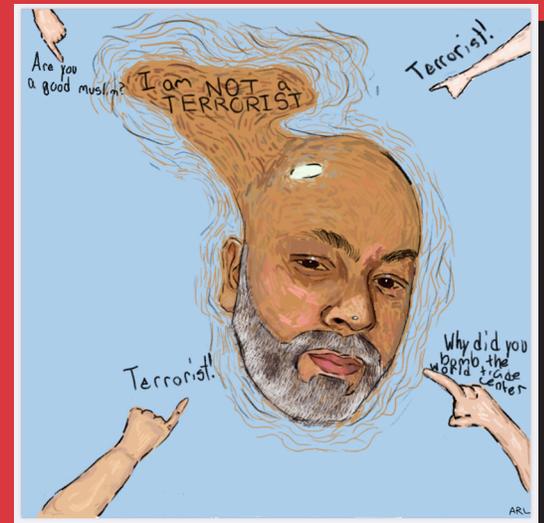
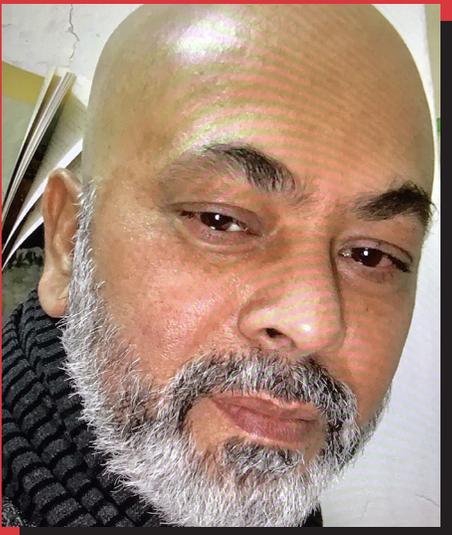
Relationship to Interviewer: Father

Below are the excerpts from an audio interview

JHC: Before.... like they were friendly and normal. After 9/11 people called me a terrorist. I was seen as coming from somewhere else. And, I'm not... like you know, when they see me, they thought like they were not safe. I felt scared. I thought it would be better, to stay home.

At work, it totally changed. People's behavior totally changed. They looked at my face, they asked: "Hey are you Muslim? You are a bad Muslim, or a good Muslim? Why are you people doing this?" I was so scared.

Their faces... was like so mean. They think I'm like something else. As if I were a terrorist, like I'm trying to do something bad.



Nurzahan, my name is David Keller Trevaskis and I am a lawyer and educator who has worked with Dr. Rose for the past 30 years. I have visited Ditmas and seen the magic Dr. Rose can make with students at the middle school. But Dr. Rose will tell you that magical teachers need enchanted students to spread the magic and you are, indeed, such a student who inspires with your talent and heart.

I was impressed by your survey video but moved deeply by your interview of your father. Your review of that interview showed a deep appreciation of family and provided a wonderful initial interview for the 9/11 project Ditmas is leading with Dr. Rose.

I hope to have some Pennsylvania students start soon on their interviews and I will share the best of those with Dr. Rose. You will be our North Star.

I am honored to share in your work.

Oral Histories

Interviewer: Alexander Juarez Reyes

Interviewee: Roberta Reyes Elmes

Relationship to Interviewer: Mother

AJR: Good morning, today I will be interviewing you on the 9/11 attacks, as you may already know.

RRE: Good morning, I'm very excited about this interview with you today.

AJR: Great! Shall we start?

RRE: Yes, we can start!

AJR: Ok great, 1st question, what is your name, where do you live?

RRE: Well I am Roberta Reyes Elmes, and I live in the U.S, Brooklyn, New York, on Cortelyou Road near the Ditmas school.

AJR: Ok, 2nd question, had you ever visited the World Trade Center in NYC before September 2001?

RRE: Yes, I did go before 9/11.

AJR: Could you tell me more about that, what did you see?

RRE: Well, It was a very beautiful day and place. The sun was shining, I even got to go to the top floor. I went to a balcony place and the wind was blowing. It took my hat and it flew away. I remember I brought my daughter she was around 2 years old, she was still in a stroller. There were also many restaurants surrounding the buildings.

AJR: Wow, it truly seemed like a beautiful place, you were very lucky. Moving on 3rd question, where were you on the morning of September 11th?

RRE: Well, I had just dropped off my daughter at kindergarten, and I was getting home, to take care of my son who was 7 months old and I was making him his baby formula.

AJR: I see, and how did you find out about the attack that day?

RRE: Well, as I was making the baby formula, I had the news channel on and I heard that a plane crashed into one of the World Trade Centers.

AJR: That must have been really shocking, especially since you just sent your daughter to kindergarten. That brings me to my next question, what were you thinking and how did you feel when you heard that a plane crashed into the World Trade Center?

RRE: Yes, it was really shocking because everyone including me thought that it was an accident, I

was also thinking I have to get my daughter out of kindergarten. I was in a state of panic, it was really something that you would have thought would never happen.

AJR: Even I can feel what you were feeling, I bet it was heartbreaking. What did you see on 9/11, were there any special things you saw on that day?

RRE: There were many, like gas and ash falling from the sky, mind you this happened in Manhattan, I was in Brooklyn. There were also the planes crashing into the Twin Towers and seeing them fall, and seeing everyone run. It was a truly horrific sight.

AJR: I could imagine what you were going through. How old were you on the day of the attack?

RRE: I was the ripe age of 20!

AJR: Wow, 20 years old. Who were you with on the day of the attack?

RRE: I was with my 7-month-old boy and my 4-year-old daughter.

AJR: Oh no you were dealing with 2 small kids that must've been hard. When did you start to take it seriously?

RRE: It was really when the 2nd plane flew into the 2nd tower and I heard of the other 2 planes near Pennsylvania, and the Pentagon. Since we all thought it was all an accident.

AJR: Oh, I see interesting. What were you going to do that day?

RRE: Well, I was going to stay at home since my daughter was in kindergarten, and I just had my son. It was going to be like any other day.

AJR: Well, thanks so much for letting me interview you, and telling me your story it was truly a beautiful experience. Have a good day!

RRE: You are welcome, I am really looking forward to this again, and am grateful you chose to interview me. Have a great day!

What a great narrative of the events your mother provided! I can picture her hat blowing away!! The details vividly allow those who read this to feel her experience. Please have Mom provide us with a current picture. If she has one from 2001 with her infant son and daughter that would be a great extra. Truly excellent work from you and your mother made a lovely contribution. - Dr. Rose

Interviewer: Abeeha Mahmood

Interviewee: Mrs. Rosalie Pinto, *School Budget Secretary - Purchase Coordinator*

AM: Where were you when you heard the news of the attacks?

Mrs. Pinto: I was in the grocery store early in the morning.

AM: How did you hear about the attack?

Mrs. Pinto: One of the grocery workers told me about the attacks.

AM: Did you hear or notice anything before the news?

Mrs. Pinto: No, I did not hear or notice anything before the news.

AM: What photographs did you see on TV?

Mrs. Pinto: I saw smoke coming out of the building and fire because it was on TV.

AM: When did you hear news of the attacks did it affect the rest of your day?

Mrs. Pinto: Yes, I was very upset. I also didn't know what was going to happen. I was afraid too. I was worried about my family.

AM: Tell me exactly what happened?

Mrs. Pinto: I was in the grocery store, and then I went home. I was with my husband at the time. I put on the television. I was watching the attacks happen on TV. I saw the 2nd building get hit by the plane. I was in front of the TV for a long time.

AM: How old were you when the attack took place?

Mrs. Pinto: I was about 44.

AM: What emotions and thoughts were going through your mind as you learned about the attacks?

Mrs. Pinto: I thought they were going to attack other places. I was scared.

AM: Why do you think young people should learn about the attacks?

Mrs. Pinto: They should learn so that it wouldn't happen again, we have to know history.

AM: Did you visit the World Trade Center after the attack?

Mrs. Pinto: I visited the museum. I visited the reflecting pool first. Then, the museum. I was in the museum for 5 hours. I was very sad that this happened.

I know Rosalie very well and you beautifully captured her emotions and her response as an adult to this event. Rosalie Pinto's image will be put up on the site with her oral history - She is Mrs. Pinto at our school. What were your emotions as you listened to her story of that day? Thank you for this exceedingly well done assignment.



Interviewer: Luis Trujillo

Interviewee: Lorena Merino

Relationship to Interviewer: Mother

LT: What was your first reaction when you heard about this incident?

LM: Well, when I heard the event happening on the news I was shocked. I rushed outside to see it. I saw people just recording. I saw this one woman that had tears on her face and she said that her husband was in the building. I felt bad. My family was speechless because of how sad this event was.

LT: How did you see the world change after this tragic event?

LM: How I saw the world change was like everyone was supporting each other. They all knew that if they had to get over this event they would all have to work as a team.

LT: How did you feel when you went to see the destructive sight?

LM: On my way to the site I could just see the sadness in people's eyes and some came out covered in dust. When I got there a bunch of firefighters were just looking for bodies and then just trying to get all the mess out.

LT: Where were you heading to on the day of the attack?

LM: I was heading to work and then I saw someone crying on the train, that one of the towers was hit. People were all connecting to the news and seeing everything.

This is a vivid and emotionally moving account from your mother and recorded by you. Thank her for her memories and wise reflection about the lessons of that day. Ask your mother to share a photo of herself or herself and you to go with this account. Bravo.



Interviewer: Saad Jan

Interviewee: Sumera Nasim

Relationship to Interviewer: Parent

SJ: Had you ever visited the World Trade Center in NYC before September 2001?

SN: No, I was very excited to come to the USA but I was waiting for my Visa.

SJ: Did you know anyone who was in the USA at the time?

SN: My parents were in the USA.

SJ: Where were you on the morning of September 11th?

SN: I was in Pakistan.

SJ: What was your first reaction when you found out about the attacks?

SN: As soon as I found out I was in awe. It was really shocking and painful.

SJ: How do you feel when you think about September 11th now?

SN: It's a really bad memory. Whenever I think about it, it brings me pain.

SJ: How do you feel your life has changed as a result of September 11th?

SN: I don't want to talk about it.

SJ: How do you think September 11th changed the world?

SN: It resulted into war in Iraq and Afghanistan and people had rage against Muslims even though Muslims were grief stricken as well.

This is an honest and important oral history response. We are grateful to your parent for providing you with this insight. Let us know if we can post this on our school site and if we can get a picture of your parent. Good job. - Dr. Rose





Interviewer: Miley Escamilla

Interviewee: Ana Laura Hernandez

Relationship to Interviewer: Mother

ME: Hi, today I will be asking you about questions of September 11th. The first question is, What is your name and where do you live?

ALH: Hi my name is Ana Laura Hernandez, and I live in Brooklyn, NY.

ME: How old were you when this happened?

ALH: When this happened I had just turned 14 a few months back.

ME: Did you know anyone that worked in the World Trade Towers?

ALH: No, I did not know anyone that worked there.

ME: After this happened did you go to any memorial?

ALH: Yes, I did. After this I did go to a memorial. I went to the fountain that has all the names of the people that worked there.

ME: What do you feel that you can learn from this, and why?

ALH: I felt that something I can learn from this is that not all heroes wear capes. We appreciate our police and firefighters and military more, because they really risked their lives for others even some police who stayed home. Many police and firefighters went back to work and started helping and risking their lives.

ME: Did you happen to be in any of the places where any of the four attacks took place?"

ALH: I actually wasn't living in the US at the time. I was still living in Mexico and I heard about this through the news.

ME: Why do you think young people should learn about September 11th?

ALH: I think that young people, especially kids, should learn about September 11th so that they can remember this important date and especially if they had family, maybe a grandparent who worked in any of these places or was a first responder. I also think that young people should learn about September 11th so that they can pay tribute. Although they may have not been born yet they can see how this event made history and changed many things.

What a great oral history from your mother who was 3 years older than you at the time. Your mother offers our audience of students and adults such great insights about 9/11 and why it should be studied. Ask her if she will send a picture of herself and if we can share her wisdom on our school site.

Excellent work. - Dr. Rose

Class 8-6

Interviewer: Arjent Voca

Interview Subject: Dad

Location: Brooklyn, worked in Manhattan

Where you were and what you were doing when you heard or learned about the events of 9/11?

I was at home watching television and eating lunch. I was going to go to work after I ate. So I was just relaxing myself before a working day. While I was almost finished with my meal, I had seen the news about a plane crashing into the Twin Towers.

I was questioning if this were real. Honestly, I was speechless for a full minute. I had thought that it was an accident at first, but then not long after the first crash, another plane was reported flying into the building. At this point, I was thinking that it wasn't an accident by now it has been a terrorist attack.

What, at that time, was your initial spoken or felt response to the events? Were you with others at work or at home?

At the time, my kids were at school and only my wife was home with me. She was doing the laundry and when I had called her she had the same reaction as me, just shocked. At that time, I had just said to myself I won't go to work because it's too dangerous and a lot of chaos. I worked in Manhattan and I wasn't willing to get near the tall buildings.

Did the events of that day change our lives that day or immediately after? If so, in what way, did they change your life? Did you immediately attempt to get in touch with other family members or friends or not reach out?

That day was very scary. I think that was true for anyone who lived in New York. Nothing like this has ever happened before, and people didn't know what to feel. I had called my brother first who had lived close to Manhattan. I was just checking up on him and see if he was alright. After I ended that call, I remembered the school calling the parents if they wanted to take their children home after the tragic event.

What was the mood on the streets of NYC if you lived here during that time or immediately after? What was the mood in any other country you were living in at that time?

The mood I remember back 20 years ago was just sadness. It was just an eye-opening revelation of how really anything could happen. You could feel the mood in the air of the New Yorker's feelings. My father, who lives in Kosovo, didn't know until the next day when I called him. He was also shocked because he had loved the Twin Towers and has been there. When I went to work a couple of days later, things were no longer the same. Everyone in the building just felt empty inside after the tragedy.

What a rich information and emotion filled oral history. Please give us your dad's full name and also your grandfather's in Kosovo. Thank you for your excellent work. - Dr. Rose



Interviewer: Aida Voca
Interview Subject: Parent
Location: Brooklyn

I remember I was in the 1st grade. My teacher was reading us a book while all of a sudden the staff at my school barged in. They told us to gather our things quickly and head to the auditorium. I remember walking down the stairs to the auditorium and seeing some of the teachers crying, trying to get a hold of their loved ones. I was so confused. I didn't know what was going. The teachers weren't telling us anything, but that our parents are going to be here shortly to pick us up. Dad arrived at the school with a very worried look on his face, when I saw that I knew that that was the breaking point of something dangerous. We headed home. I ran straight to the television and watched the news.

There I saw a major terrorist attack going on. I was nothing but scared. My whole heart was slowly breaking into pieces for the people that were in those buildings. They were having to deal with all that at once. I remember hearing Biondina crying in the bedroom not knowing what's going on and confused why everyone was so interested in listening to what the news reporter had to say. As for mom and dad, they were just as frightened and lost. They didn't know if the people attacking the Twin Towers would come farther into Brooklyn and do the same thing. They were so worried.

These events definitely changed everyone's life immediately after just by how traumatizing and effective it was. People have never experienced something like this, especially in a city like New York, so we didn't know how to feel or even act.

This is a beautifully recollected oral history. Please give us your parent's full name. I think it is remarkable that someone in first grade has such a strong recollection of the events. This says so much about your parent's maturity at such a young age and is a great contribution to the project. - Dr. Rose

Interviewer: Fatima Ezzahrae El Hajji
Interview Subject: Parents
Location: Morocco

Both my parents were still in Morocco at the time that 9/11 happened. Both my parents and I are immigrants and did not come to America until 10 years later. However, this does not mean we do not have stories relating to it. My parents believe that it was a huge tragedy. They feel that it should be remembered. However, they believe that the backlash Muslim communities received over something that a terrorist group did is unjustified.

They say that groups of people that spread hatred do not reflect the Islamic beliefs. They argue that other Muslims should not be blamed for something a terrorist group did. My mother has accounts of racism against her when she first arrived in America and could barely speak English. She says that she faced discrimination and in some cases was even harassed because she was wearing the hijab. She was openly Muslim. My father goes on to say that it was a disgusting show of hatred and huge tragedy for America because so many lives were lost.

He currently works near the Empire State building and the World Trade Center so he sympathizes with the people that were in the area at the time and the people that lost their loved ones in this huge tragic event.

This is beautifully done. Please provide your parents' names and where they lived in Morocco. I think the bias felt against all Muslims unjustly is a key thread in these histories. Thank you for contributing so meaningfully to this project. - Dr. Rose



Interviewer: Vivian Chen

Interview Subject: Jiang Yao, Father

Location: Ohio

Summary

That day I was working at my restaurant in Ohio when I heard my customers talk about the tragic 9-11 event. Everyone was shocked and couldn't imagine such a scary thing would happen. Nobody would have ever expected the World Trade Center to be hit. I was utterly shocked that the hijackers would do such a thing. I was with my employees at my restaurant. My employees were talking about this horrible event. Personally, this event didn't directly affect my life. I wasn't there in NYC when all of this went down. However, this event made me more aware of the dangers that can possibly occur. I didn't get in touch with my family members or friends, since none of them lived or were in NYC that day. I was glad that they were safe. The mood in Ohio was gloomy. Everybody felt very sympathetic toward the victims who passed away and their families. Many felt angry at the hijackers for doing such a terrible thing and hurting people. Some were still in disbelief because this event was just so shocking. My workday went according to schedule, since this didn't directly impact me.

I believe that we should move on and instead focus on our problems in the present. We should deal with issues like Covid and economic uncertainty. However, this doesn't mean that we should completely de-emphasize 9-11 commemorations since this event took many lives and will forever be unforgettable. We should still remember and mourn for those who unfortunately passed away that day. 9/11 commemorations should not only be done by families who were a part of the event, but the general population should also do it too. Even if it didn't affect them directly, they should still learn about it since it was a very important event that changed many lives drastically. To sum that up, I believe that we should mainly focus on present issues, but we shouldn't forget this dramatic event.

Thank your father for this very personal and measured oral history of the event as well as his ideas about continuing to commemorate it. Please ask him what the name of his restaurant in Ohio was and where exactly it was located in the state-city or town. We would love a picture of the two of you since you have so many contributions on the site. Warmly, - Dr. Rose

Interviewer: Jeyla Villalotero Sorto

Interview Subject: Lidia Sorto

Where were you that day and what were you doing?

I was on my way to work on a train.

What do you remember happening?

I remember that they had to stop the trains because it was getting too crazy and crowded.

At what time was your initial spoken or felt response to the events?

When I realized what was happening was when I got out of the train station and saw how many people were there. They were yelling things so I checked my phone and then saw what had happened to the Twin Towers building. I wasn't home. I was on my way to work as I said before. I remembered being in the train and it stopped so everyone was confused and scared - so was I.

Did the events from that day change our lives?

In my opinion I think yes, because it was a really hard experience to go through and scary so it made us see how the world actually was. As soon as I found out I started calling my daughter and she told me that she was trying to contact me too. So we both were scared - but I told her to not worry because I was going to be fine.

What was the mood in NYC after that?

It was horrible to be honest because it wasn't the same anymore. It was all sad because as you know so many people died that day so almost every day, it was sad to pass by there. I was going to work so my work schedule did change because I wasn't able to get there so yes.

As you know the 20th anniversary date of 9/11 is coming up. Do you think we should do something or is it no longer important?

Yes, I would love to do it because that's something that you'll never forget. It was something horrible that happened that day. We should commemorate that day.

What a detailed and important oral history your grandmother has given us. Thank her so much for sharing her emotions with us. - Dr. Rose

Interviewer: Ludjina Victor

Interview Subject: Mother

Location: Haiti

Please share where you were and what you were doing when you heard or learned about the events of 9/11. Please share as much as you remember from that day.

I was a teenager that time and was in Haiti, at home during the event. I was watching the news. I immediately started to try and contact my family members that lived in New York.

Did the events of that day change our lives that day or immediately after? If so, in what way, did they change your life?

Yes, of course, the events of that day changed our lives that day mentally and physically including the lives that were lost.

Did you immediately attempt to get in touch with other family members or friends or not reach out?

Yes, I used a public international phone while in Haiti.

What was the mood in any other country you were living in at that time? Share what you remember. Were people more or less patriotic here?

Yes, they felt so bad because they had brothers and sisters that they lost as a result of this event. It was something very sad to think about.

If you were in school on that day at the beginning of that school year, how did the school react to the news?

We stayed in silence for a while. After that, we talked about the same topic, asking if any of us had family members or friends that died during the event.

We are coming up on the 20th anniversary date of 9/11 and you are 20 years older now living in a different world. How do you feel about 9/11 today and its importance?

It's something that we should be remembering at all times because so many people died that time. We didn't expect it to happen like this.

What do you feel? Will you, on 9/11 /2021, think about that day or be focused on current challenges?

To be honest, I would be more focused on current challenges because the life problems sometimes end up to be overwhelming. But 9/11 will always be remembered.

Summary:

My mother happened to be a teen in Haiti during the Twin Towers crash. She had some family members living in New York that time including my grandparents. Luckily, my mother's relatives were safe; my grandparents were in Brooklyn and far away from the scene. My mother also explained how she tried contacting her relatives using a public phone since she didn't have a cell phone at that time. She told me that many of the students in her high school, including other people from her town, felt heartbroken and that some even lost their siblings.

This is beautifully done and detailed. Thank your mother and give us her full name as well as the city or province of Haiti she lived in then. I also appreciate that you summarized the oral history and noted that while cell phones were in use, they were not that prevalent at that time. Thank you and bravo. - Dr. Rose

Interviewer: Destiny Teah

Interview Subject: Brother

When I learned about 9/11, I was in school. I don't remember what grade or year but I was very young in elementary probably 1st grade. It was a very tragic day, many people died, and the Twin Towers fell. It was complete chaos.

The event that day drastically changed many lives in America, I felt like many were heartbroken because of dead relatives. Many were scared. Many were shocked. There must've been many emotions but I can't really say since I didn't experience it firsthand. My classmates and I were shocked. The room was gloomy. I feel that 9/11 was a very important day in American history. It isn't some little event that will be forgotten. I feel that it is important enough to commemorate it every year with projects and ceremonies because it had a great impact in America and in its history as well.

I think it is interesting and cool that he also was born after the event but still has strong feelings about its need to be commemorated. Thanks for this unusual and valuable interview. - Dr. Rose

Interviewer: Ke Zheng
Interview Subject: Mother
Location: China

When my mom first heard about the plane crash, she was about 18 years old and living in China. She heard about the news on the television. Surprisingly she thought it was like a show or something. After a few days, by listening to the Chinese news, she knew it was an attack. When she came to America, it was 2013. As she walked through the streets of the towers she thought that it was beautiful, but just so different.

In addition, I interviewed my friend, she is 13 years old now. She learned about 9/11 in school and teachers talked about it. She thinks that we learn it every year. Therefore, studying it is getting boring. She thinks it was a very tragic time and how the planes crashed into the towers was just horrible. She thinks that during Covid pandemic, we should learn about Covid things to keep us safe from the virus instead of 9/11. 9/11 already happened. We need to know about safety tips about Covid risks now because Covid is happening now.

Thank you for both of these perspectives. Where exactly in China was your mother on September 11, 2001? What province or town? We have many international perspectives. Hers is important. I also value the perspective of your thirteen year old friend. Thank you for providing us with these perspectives for the project. - Dr. Rose

Interviewer: Danielle-Angelina Clarke
Interview Subject: Mother

My mom was getting ready to go to Germany and thought what was happening was a movie.

My mom was at home in NYC getting ready to go back to Germany because she was in the military. As she was packing, she saw smoke (you could see the towers from our house). When she saw it on television, she thought it was a movie but my grandma had to tell her it was real.

She said this event changed everyone's lives but for her it changed her life because she saw body parts like a hand or a torso. She also recalls seeing a couples' hands like holding each other. She couldn't take it anymore because of the smoke and the thing that came into her head was that she had a 1 year old son at the time (my brother). She didn't want

to inhale too much smoke because she didn't know what she was breathing. It might have been bones and more.

She heard people on the phone asking others if they were okay or how they felt. She remembers that my grandma told us that we had a cousin that worked near the towers and people were worried for her because they had not heard from her. Thankfully she was okay, but after the video she told me she was running away from the big cloud of smoke.

She feels that 9/11 should be important. Actually she thinks it should be a federal holiday because we lost so many people.

This is a great written description of the terrific oral history you gave use as a video. Please give us your mother's exact rank and the unit she served with to add the proper details to this stellar contribution to our project. Warmly, - Dr. Rose

Interviewer: Brianna Cueto Garcia
Interview Subject: Dad
Location: Staten Island

The person I am interviewing is my dad. He was in Staten Island working in his uncle's house when he found out in the news that a plane hit one of the towers. While he was watching the TV, the second plane crashed into the other tower. He told me all you could hear was sirens everywhere, that's when they realized that there were terrorists. My dad worked fixing gates, so he knew firefighters. The ones closest to the towers knew him and they all died.

It also hit him that he was in Staten Island and the house was in Brooklyn so it would be hard to get home that day, but eventually they made it. At Ground Zero only people like police officers, firefighters and others were allowed in, so my dad and my uncle were the others. Everything was dark and dusty but they still worked. While they went to fix plus rebuild the firefighters' gates there would be so many paparazzi taking pictures of them while they were working.

Thank you for this distinctive oral history of 9/11. The visual and auditory details your father provided are accurate and needed for these accounts. Please give us his full name and if he could provide the neighborhood in Staten Island where he was that day. Thank you for this contribution. - Dr. Rose

Interviewer: Arnick Etienne

Interview Subject: Mother

Location: Haiti

During 9/11, my mom lived in Haiti at the time, she first learned about the attack when she arrived home from work. She felt hurt as she watched the news with one of her brothers.

She stated: "I felt sad for all of the victims who lost their lives and for the families who had lost their loved ones. As a Haitian, I always admired America, I saw it as an invincible country."

Although she saw it as an invincible country, but after seeing how two airplanes had crashed into the Twin Towers, she started to have her doubts.

She notes: "I also had a brother and sister living in America at the time, and I was wondering if they were safe or not." Haiti doesn't have the best internet or wifi so my mom and her brother were trying to find a way to contact their siblings in America. It took a couple of days for her to be able to contact them but, eventually, she was able to make contact with them. This event definitely changed her life, "It made me realize the fragility of life and this increased my trust in God because he's the only one that can protect us against any evil."

She's right, life is so fragile, and looking at this event made her realize it even more. My mom is also Christian so she has faith in God. She would pray to him, asking him to make sure something like this never happens again. Nobody did contact her though since she lived in Haiti, and a majority of her friends lived in Haiti as well. The people who lived in Haiti felt sad and hopeless. In her words, "They associated this event with the end of the world." People were crying, praying, and hoping that in the end, everything would be okay. It's been 20 years since 9/11 has happened and my mom still sees 9/11 as important.

She states: "I see it as a traumatic event to this day because of the way the victims have lost their lives. I think it's still important to commemorate 9/11 because, in my opinion, it's a way for some families to memorialize the lives of those who passed away during that time without having had the time to say goodbye." People should be able to use 9/11 as a day to remember their loved ones who passed that day and honor the first responders and others who helped during that tragic event. "Anyone who wants to show sympathy to the mourning families should be able to participate in viewing the 9/11 Memorial. They could place down flowers or flags into the names of the victims during the ceremony." Even though my mom does remember most of the events that happened during 9/11, she doesn't think about it too often now. Since there are so many other things happening right now like with the pandemic, the Black Lives Matter movement, Help Save Asian Lives movement, and more. Some of her final thoughts are, "I would think about 9/11 but, I would be more focused on the current challenges that we're facing right now since they're a part of my present life. Still, 9/11 will be an event that I will always remember because, since that day, life in America has never been the same."

This is a magnificent oral history of 9/11 since your mother is also a natural storyteller and a deep thinker. Please provide us with her full name and exactly where in Haiti she lived at that time. You did an excellent job on this project and your oral history adds so much to it plus includes details about the state of technology in Haiti. Warmly, - Dr. Rose



Interviewer: Lyzbeth Sanchez

Interview Subject: Father

Location: Bronx

I was shocked because the attack was so unexpected. I was especially upset when I learned about how many deaths and injuries there were. My family around me were looking at the television and were so surprised. They were anxious because no one could have seen this coming.

I was in the Bronx in my apartment watching television. It came up on the television and everyone was devastated. Nobody knew what to think. My dad said he was worried about so many of his friends who worked in the buildings. One of his friends was a security guard in one of the buildings. They were very close so he had to make sure she was alive and well. She turned out to be fine. He was relieved but everyone still was very upset about the whole situation. He stated that his overall feeling was confusion and he really couldn't believe what he saw. My dad used to be an officer and helped out with the cleaning. He is healthy now. He is very glad that he is, but there's always sadness when he thinks about the day due to the lives lost.

This is so well done. Please give us your dad's name and where he lived in the Bronx. Thank you for such a wonderful contribution to this project. - Dr. Rose

Interviewer: Samurah Islam

Interview Subject: Mother

Location: Brooklyn

My mom was in school doing her work while 9/11 happened. She didn't hear much about it during then, while in school, but she saw many students getting called to leave early by their parents.

My mom felt scared when she found out the event occurred. She has no clue what was going on at first, why so many kids were leaving and getting picked up, until her mom came to get her. Then her mother explained what was happening. She was at school with other students until her mom came to pick her up just like the others.

9/11 changed our lives. Many people died. They got sick including firefighters and police officers helping out who risked their lives. It changed my mom's life. She had to face people being racist towards her, getting called a terrorist and getting bullied because she was Muslim. People saying all Muslims are terrorists because the attack was by Wahhabi, a terrorist group from Saudi Arabia.

The mood after 9/11 in NYC was "dreadful" as my mom says, there was still smoke and fire where the Trade Center used to be. People were less patriotic, racism towards Muslims started. My mom started getting called terrorist and bullied because she was also a Muslim. While she was in school, she was confused as to why so many people were getting picked up and leaving so early.

Mom says, "I can't believe it's already been 20 years, two decades." She feels that 9/11 still has a traumatizing effect on herself and many others. 9/11 is still important in her life even after many years. She said we shouldn't just move on and get over it, it has affected many people's lives. It wouldn't be easy to just move on from it. She thinks 9/11 commemorations and remembrances shouldn't just be done by families. It should be done as a community since so many people were affected and a part of 9/11. People that also weren't a part of 9/11 should also be able to remember it, they may have family members that were a part of it or that want to be able to support others. My mom feels that 9/11 is a very important part of her life. On 9/11 2021 she will be focusing on how 9/11 took a turn on her life, changed her life, and how it affected her.

This is such a detailed and deeply analyzed and told recollection of 9/11. Please provide us with your mother's full name. Thank her for sharing with us the particular impact of the event on her as a Muslim and her feelings about the need to commemorate the impact of 9/11 even today in 2021. This is a needed contribution to this project. Bravo. - Dr. Rose

Interviewer: Mohinobu Tokhirova

Interview Subject: Dad

Location: South Korea

Please share where you were and what you were doing when you heard or learned about the events of 9/11. Please share as much as you remember from that day.

The day 9/11 took place, I was in South Korea working in your uncle's restaurant. I was tired and decided to take a nap. When I woke up, I had gotten news from my brother. He said the Twin Towers in New York had gone down. I obviously was so shocked hearing about this tourist site people flock to from around the world all of a sudden just to be destroyed is insane. I was so shocked. It was as if I were still dreaming.

What at that time was your initial spoken or felt response to the events? Were you with others at work or at home? If yes, how did they react or interact with you as all of you digested the events of that day? Please share as much with me as you remember.

I was not in America at the time, but I prayed the people who were and in New York were safe. I prayed that they made it home to their families in time.

Did the events of that day change our lives that day or immediately after? If so, in what way, did they change your life? Did you immediately attempt to get in touch with other family members or friends or not reach out? Were you called on landline or cell by anyone? What did the callers ask?

Not really, but I did have some thoughts about coming to New York or not because while I was in Korea. I thought about visiting North Korea and ever since the attack it was just like wow, do I still go? Is it safe?

What was the mood on the streets of NYC if you lived here during that time or immediately after? What was the mood in any other country you were living in at that time? Share what you remember. Were people more or less patriotic here? If you were in school on that day at the beginning of that school year, how did the school react to the news? If you were at work, did your workday go according to a regular schedule?

The mood of the people where I was, was just sadness and shock overall. Like I said you hear about these amazing tourist attractions and plan on going one day just for you to wake up one day and find the attraction destroyed. It just didn't feel real.

We are coming up on the 20th anniversary date of 9/11 and you are 20 years older now living in a different world. How do you feel about 9/11 today and its importance? Is it still important to commemorate it every year with projects and ceremonies or given climate change, Covid, racial inequities and economic uncertainty, should we just move on to deal with all these issues and de-emphasize 9/11 since it happened in 2001? Should 9/11 commemorations only be done by the families and groups who were part of that event and not be part of the general population focus? What do you feel? Will you on 9/11 /2021 think about the day or be focused on current challenges?

I believe 9/11 is important and should be important to commemorate every year because it was such a shocking and sad day for many, many Americans and not just Americans were affected. I do still think about the people who lost their lives that day and their families and their survivors. I think it's important to always remember them even if you don't think it's important to commemorate 9/11 every year.

Thank him for the beautifully told and felt recollection he shared with the project. - Dr. Rose

Interviewer: Jayden Carazo

Interview Subject: Frank Carazo

Location: West Broadway and Worth Street

As we all know about the tragedies of September 11, 2001 (9/11) we all remember the losses of all the people of that day. Many people lost their loved ones on 9/11, but it is very important that we remember all of the brave souls that went into that building and all the people that were taken from us!

Today I will be interviewing my father Frank Carazo, someone who was in downtown Manhattan that morning.

What were you doing in downtown Manhattan that morning?

I was working on West Broadway & Worth Street, fixing a man's AC unit. I first noticed the attacks when I, and the man I was working with, were driving down the West Side Highway leaving the job.

What is the first thing you noticed?

The first thing I noticed was a big loud bang and the next thing you noticed was smoke coming from one of the towers.

What was your first reaction?

My first reaction was, we need to get out of Manhattan right away. At the time, no one knew exactly what was happening. Everyone just thought a plane crashed into the World Trade Center. The first person I spoke to was your mom, she called to ask if I was okay. She told me to get out of Manhattan fast. We got to the Battery Tunnel and got out of the city as quickly as we could. Later we found out that they shut down all ways out of the city.

What was your first reaction to finding out that it was a terrorist attack?

My first reaction was praying for everyone. I was hoping everyone was safe. I thanked God for keeping me and my partner and family safe.

This is a vivid and great oral history account from your father. I recall the roads out of Manhattan being closed that day and how difficult it was to drive. Please thank your father for his contribution and ask if you two can take a photo to include with this contribution on the website. Bravo! - Dr. Rose



Interviewer: Henry Calixto

Interview Subject: Diego, Brother

My brother Diego who is 24 years old was in school during the 9/11 attacks. He remembers the school was going through immediate shutdown while that process was ongoing, he did not know what the reason of the school closing was. When he got home and turned his television on, the news channel came on. He learned about the Twin Towers being attacked.

When my brother saw the news on the television, he felt scared because he thought that they were going to have more attacks throughout the city. The person that was with him was our uncle who was looking at the news as well and was extremely shocked.

The way those events changed our lives today is higher security measures throughout New York especially in the city. He did not reach out to any family members as he was still a kid and our parents reached out to our uncle to make sure if we were safe and sound.

He was in elementary school during that time and one big thing that would go on was a moment of silence, teachers would talk about the attacks to the students. They asked if any of the students needed help or someone to talk to about the tragedy. The teachers said they were there for them.

9/11 is still as important as it was the day that it happened. Yes it is still important to commemorate it every year regardless of climate change, Covid, inequalities, and economic uncertainty, but of course in a safe manner. I feel like regardless of how long since it happened, 9/11 will forever be a major attack that happened, not only in New York, but the United States as a whole. On 9/11 /2021, I will be focused on current challenges but 9/11 will also be a day of remembrance to those who lost/gave their lives on that day. It will be remembered by those who were present during the attacks.

Initially when I developed this project, I thought a child had to be at least 10 years old to be able to meaningfully contribute. Your brother Diego is one several children who were as young as 4 or 5 and had vivid emotional and factual memories about this time. Please thank him for us and see if he has a picture from that time and can recollect the school and borough he was in that day. Thank you for this important contribution. - Dr. Rose



Interviewer: Jennifer Guadalupe

Interview Subject: Mother

Location: Mexico

For this project I'll be interviewing my mom who was not in New York, but was in high school in Mexico.

She was in class doing her class work when her teacher stood up and announced that in New York planes crashed into the Twin Towers. The students were all shocked when they heard the news.

She went home and her siblings asked if she had heard what happened. But nobody really was worried because there haven't been any family members in New York.

She feels bad about how so many people lost their family members and that there were people who could not contact each other. Our family were lucky to be safe. They didn't lose anyone.

She said that anyone who feels bad or is in New York could be a part of the 9/11 situation because we are New Yorkers. This is where we are from, it's our home and we should at least feel badly for the ones who have suffered that day.

This is beautifully done. Ask your mother for details of the location in Mexico and her school and maybe a picture of her as well. Thank you for this contribution to the project. - Dr. Rose

Interviewer: Karla Marin Reyes

Interview Subject: Parents

My mom and dad at the time worked together at clothes factory near Manhattan. My mom was pregnant with my older sister, at the time when the first plane hit. My mom was on the bus on her way to work and saw it from there. My dad was already at work and saw it. Later on, they were working and also seeing how the first tower was on fire. Then the second plane hit. They were shocked and scared so were their coworkers. As they saw the towers falling they saw one of their coworkers running for her life away from the smoke behind her. She made it safely to the building and everyone ran towards her and gave her water. They sat her down while seeing others running away and getting caught in the smoke. Luckily, they didn't have kids yet and didn't have to worry about picking them up from school or the kids getting worried about their parents. That is a day no one would ever forget.

I think that the 9/11 is very important because many innocent people died that day. Many lost their family members. It was a big mess. People were worried about family and friends that worked there or near there that weren't picking up their phones.

You caught the spirit and the sheer horror of that day so well. Can you provide us with the names of your parents and the address or neighborhood they worked, so their names can be included in the roster of those who have contributed histories to our project. Thank you so much for this contribution. - Dr. Rose

Interviewer: Xavier Garcia

Interview Subject: Mother

Location: New Jersey

My mom was living in New Jersey with my older sister who got sick the previous night. When trying to call out of work, one of her friends called her and started panicking. She asked where she was but because she was so panicked, she didn't realize she called the house phone. She told her about the first plane crashing into the building and told her to turn on her television. That's how she first heard about it. My mom used to use the Path train which is located under where the buildings collapsed. That train, so close to the Towers, was the one my mother took to work every day.

My mother was at home and she thought we were under attack because she believed no U.S pilot would crash into the World Trade Center.

She believes that it is important to acknowledge the tragic day that it was. She notes that we have built it so that an event like that will never occur again.

This event caused my mom to move back to NYC because with 9/11 happening it was shutting down the city. It caused the commute from New Jersey to be way more time consuming. This was a big issue because at the time, my sister was a young child at daycare and my mom didn't want to be late every day to pick my older sister up.

Such a great New Jersey, Path train connected story. Please find out where your mother lived in New Jersey and perhaps get a photo of her to go with the story. Thank you so much. - Dr. Rose

Interviewer: Subhah Hoque

Interview Subject: Mother

Location: New York

She was going about her day to day routine, the same as all the others. At the time, my family was living with my cousins as well. As she was nursing my older sister, who was a month old at the time, she and my aunt suddenly got a call from my uncle. He had said, "The Twin Towers are burning." My father rushed to turn the television on, and they saw the Towers fall.

My mother said that she was at first shocked, in a state of disbelief. But then the sorrow and sadness set in. They went outside, and the cars in front of the house had a layer of ash overlaying them. My mom said that she was in such a state of shock and hysteria, she thought out of nowhere, "We need to clean the dust off the cars now." Her mind simply couldn't process it, because it was so upsetting. The rest of the family all called each other in states of worry and shock, making sure that no one was hurt. Everyone was completely overtook with sadness and shock. It took a while to be able to reach each other, but two fourths of the family was already together and everyone was able to get together quickly after giving up on the phone.

The majority of my mom's family lives in Bangladesh, and upon hearing the news they called in states of concern and worry. They had no clue how close my mom (and at the time) her two children were to the impact. Their sadness was palpable, even living in a completely different country. My mom is a housewife, and at the time she had a two year old son and one month old daughter to look after. She didn't leave the house that much, as occupied as she was, but when she did she remembers that everyone's face was solemn. The sadness was visible. Her sisters and family in Bangladesh were sad too, and worried even still. She says that at first, upon coming to the United States, the bustling city and all of the people was overwhelming. But she missed it and would much rather prefer that after the solemn air that America took on. At the time, she didn't wear the hijab, but she says that when people realized that she and my family were Muslim, they would look at them with "looks of insult and

hurt". Although it's lessened today, back then she couldn't go outside without someone looking at her as if she didn't deserve to be standing there.

My mother believes that 9/11 is still incredibly important today. She says that even though it happened twenty years ago, it does not take away any of its significance. 9/11 was a tragedy. It was scary how such a monumental building that was so famous and beautiful could crumble so quickly, taking so many lives with it. My mother continues on to say that the projects and the acts of commemoration that happen today are vital. It is important to remember that day, and make sure that nothing like this ever happens again. To quote her, "Never ever, never ever again. Many would not survive if something like this happens again when it shouldn't have happened in the first place." She also thinks that the general population should commemorate 9/11. For the families that had lost someone, she believes that it is very important that they would be comforted and reassured that they have people behind them, and that there are so many people who are there by their sides. It was a national tragedy, in a "kind of way" it's affected everyone somehow. Every anniversary, she feels that same shock and pain that she felt the day of, and the twentieth anniversary of the day hit her hard since it felt like it was just yesterday.

When asked if she had anything else to add, she said that she believes that people shouldn't blame each other. It's very important to stick together and make sure that nothing like this ever happens again. She says that we must stay together and get rid of the divides that separate us, and work together to make the future beautiful again.

It was such a joy to read the wisdom and reflections of your mother. I am not surprised since your natural talents and depth certainly come from her. Her story offers insights in to the mood and biases that permeated our society then and sadly still do. Tell her that her advice to all of us is well expressed and so urgently needed. Your art and writing response to this project as over the three years I have read your work is deep and unique. Continue to voice your views and convey other views beautifully. - Dr. Rose

Interviewer: Nika Kostinenko Sule

Interview Subject: Mother

Location: Brooklyn

I interviewed my mother for this project. I didn't ask that many questions, I just asked her to say all that she remembered. Then, she told me this whole story while I typed it out.

I had just started my senior year of high school. I was in second period but in my school, it was a band not a period. It was Band B. I was in my keyboarding class where we learned to type superfast.

Very slowly, the PA started making announcements for students to come to their dean's office or the guidance counselor or the main office. We all thought it was super strange that so many people were being called in.

Finally, the teacher got a call on her classroom phone and broke the news to us, the first Tower had been hit. The initial calls were students who had parents that worked in the North Tower. The later calls were of worried families making arrangements to bring their kids home.

We all cut our next classes and just went outside into the courtyard where everyone hung out to smoke cigarettes. It was raining. It was not drops falling from the sky, it was ashes and debris.

My friend said it looked like the day was a mess and we should go cut the rest of the day and hang out in her house. She lived across the street from my High School, Murrow. We played with her bunny and chased it around the house. Finally, I got bored and walked home.

I remember walking into my house on Ocean Parkway, right around the block from Ditmas. My

parents were frightened. I didn't have a cell phone and had left my beeper at home. They did not know why everyone else was home with their kids and I had not shown up. They had the news playing on television. It was still raining debris. After they realized I had not understood the severity of the situation and I was home safe, everyone calmed down.

My parents were drinking a ton of vodka with the news blaring. I went to my grandpa's roof on the 18th floor. We watched the dark clouds of smoke rising from where the Twin Towers had stood. It took many weeks to process and comprehend what had actually taken place.

I found out four days later my friend who had graduated a few years before me, was working in the North Tower as a security guard. He was trying to get people out and a beam fell on his leg. He was rescued and recovered in the hospital. I remember wanting to organize with my friends to go help in the search efforts but everyone's parents were on high alert. We were sure another attack was imminent. We didn't feel safe in our apartment. We weren't allowed to leave the house.

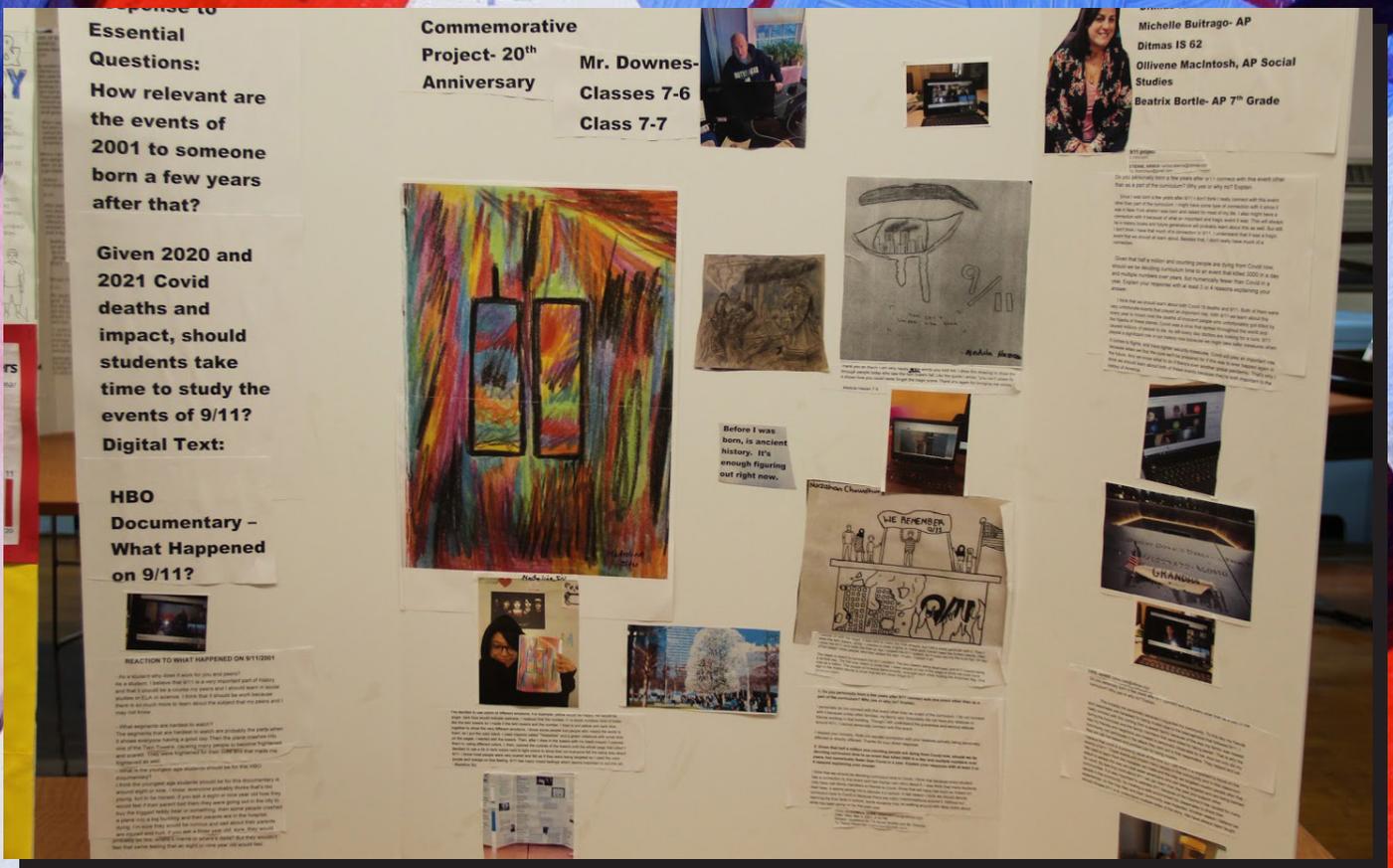
All television channels just played nonstop news stories about everyone's accounts. Footage kept resurfacing of people sharing their personal recordings. It was traumatic and still is to this day. I have not even been able to bring myself to visit the site of the memorial, even though I had to often times be in that area. I remember a ton of anti-Arabic and anti-Muslim hate crimes. A bodega on Ditmas avenue was raided. It was found to be hosting terrorists making plans in the back for more attacks. It was all just so much.

This is such a powerful narrative of your mother's which you captured so well. I have missed reading your writing this year and of course you will be in the e-book and on the website for this project. Might we get a photo of you and your mother and her full name for our list of oral histories. Thank you so much for this rich, evocative piece and thank your mother for sharing her deep felt memories of this day. Much of what she says so resonates with my memories as well. - Dr. Rose



STUDENT CREATIONS

Student works from art to poems to responses



Poems

Why

by Yessy Peña

Why Why Why
I haven't done anything, have I?
I get blamed for these things
When in reality, no bells ring
I am sick and tired
Of being despised rather than admired
I believe I'm beautiful, but everyone shrugs
I guess that means no one else does
Why Why Why
I get put into these stereotypes
Without realizing that they're all just lies
When will people stop
It really does make me feel distraught
Why Why Why
Is all I can say
Maybe one day people will eventually
make it all go away

This poem is based on the perspective of someone who goes through a lot of discrimination and racism just because of the fact that they are Muslim. Of course, I myself will never know what that feels like through the eyes of a Muslim, but through the experience of my peers, and the things I've seen, I made this poem. The discrimination towards Muslims has gone too far, and we need to continue bringing awareness to it.

I Love You

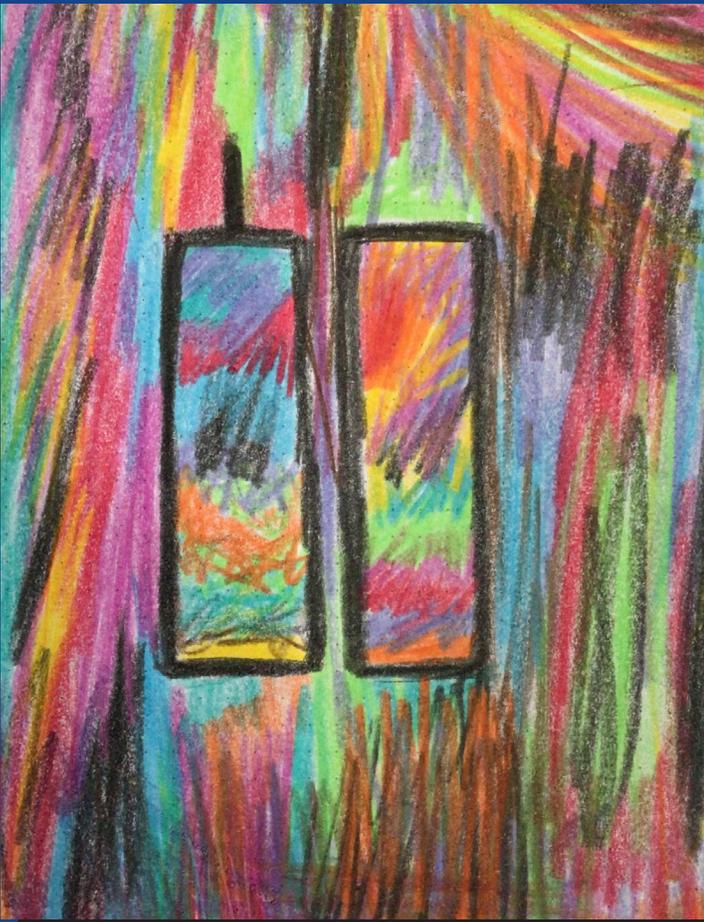
by Yessy Peña

I love you
The three words I rarely ever said
Even though they made me who I am
The three words that I won't be able to
start saying anymore
Probably because I never thought about
them before
Maybe it's just the debris, but these three
words were more important than I thought
And now they won't know that I realized
that
I wish I had one more chance
But in the end, I knew this fog would be
my last glance
It's okay though
I'll see them soon
Then maybe, just maybe, I can finally say
I love you

This poem is the most common perspective we can infer many people had during what was happening on this event. Many people died, and although we don't know for sure what their thoughts were meanwhile, I think it is true that many felt this exact way.

Art

Madeline Siu



I've decided to use colors of different emotions. For example, yellow would be happy, red would be anger, dark blue would indicate sadness.

I realized that the number 11 in block numbers kind of looks like the Twin Towers, so I made it the Twin Towers and the number.

I tried to put yellow and dark blue together to show the very different emotions. I know some people lost people who meant the world to them, so I put the color black. I used crayons called "Twistables" and a green notebook with small dots on the pages.

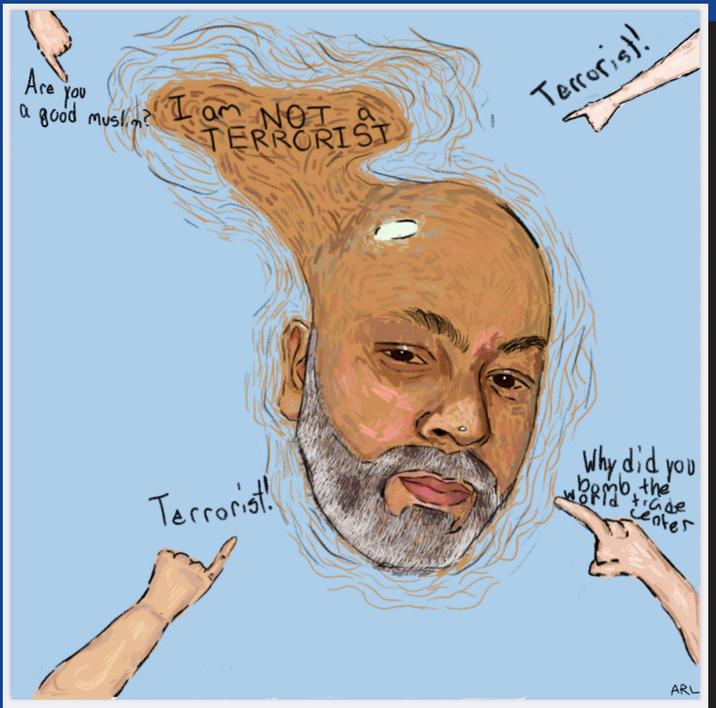
I started with the towers. Then, after I drew in the towers with my black crayon, I colored them in, using different colors.

I, then, colored the outside of the towers until the whole page had color! I decided to use many dark colors next to light colors to show that not everyone felt the same way about 9/11.

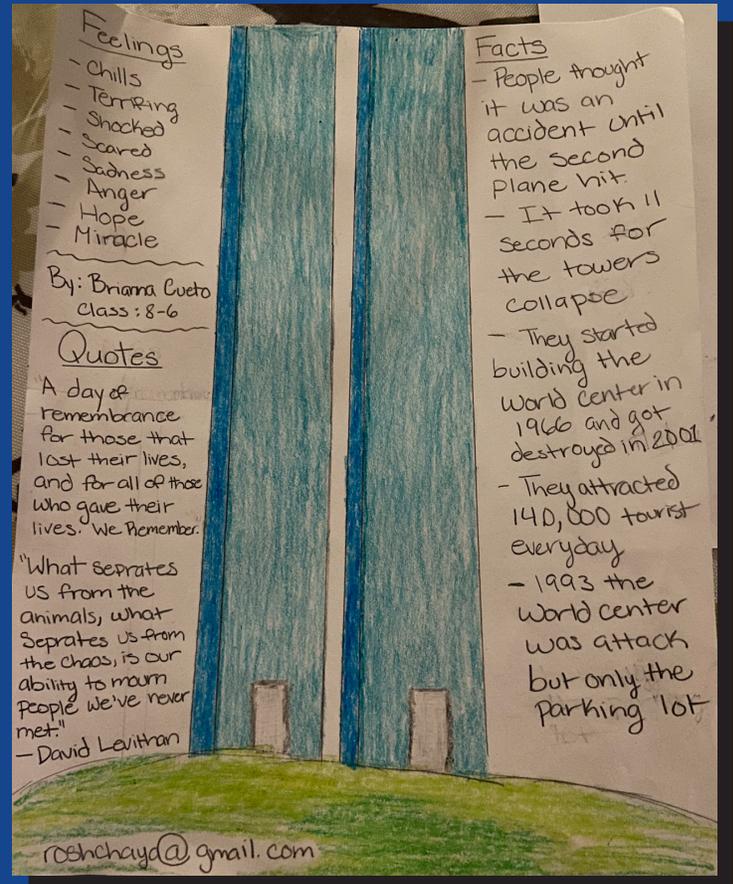
I know most people were very scared and felt as if they were being targeted so I used the color purple and orange for that feeling. 9/11 has many mixed feelings which seems important to put into art.



Asher Loeb



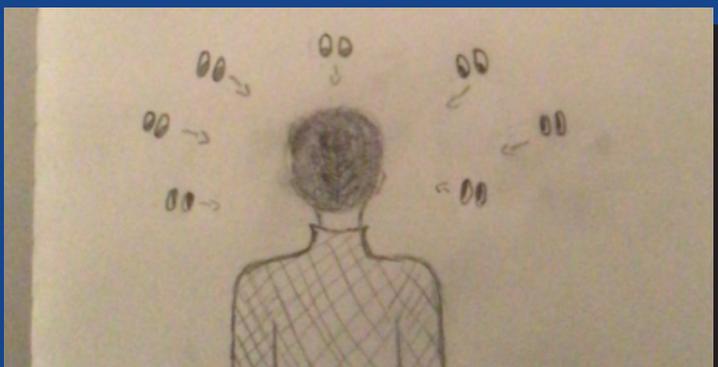
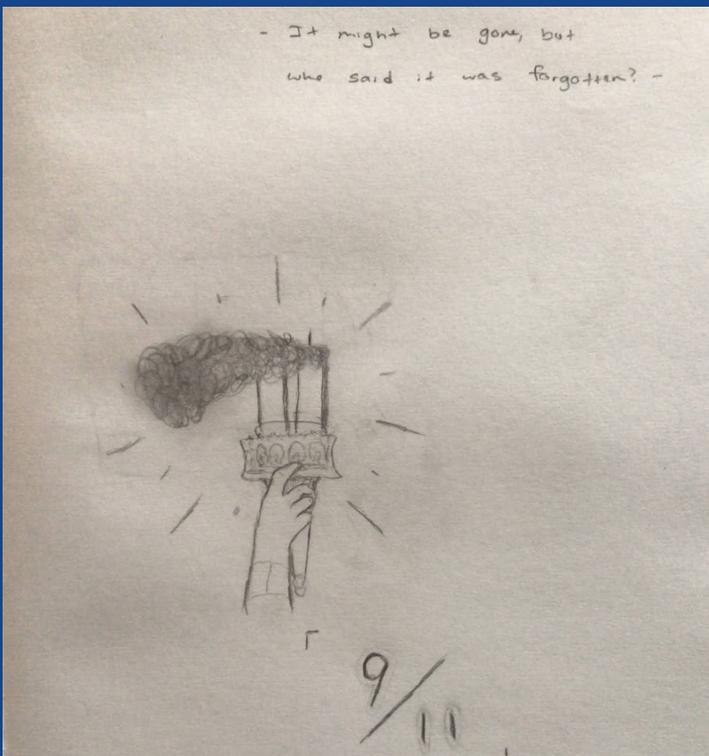
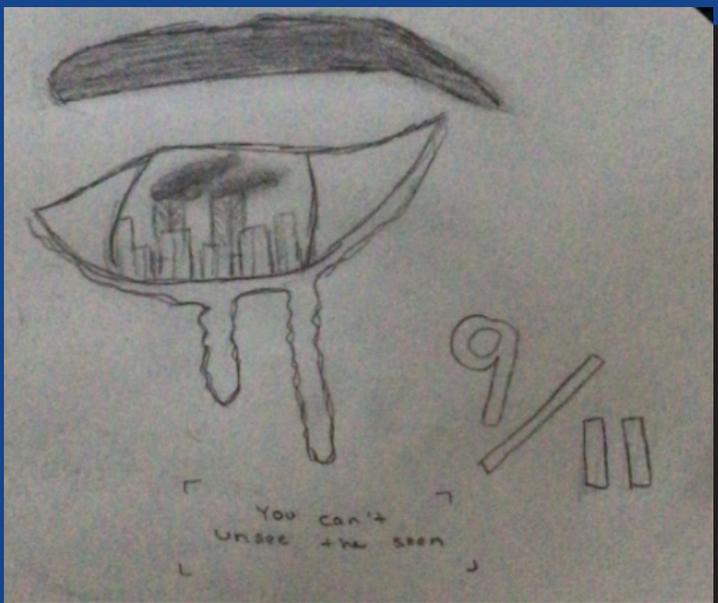
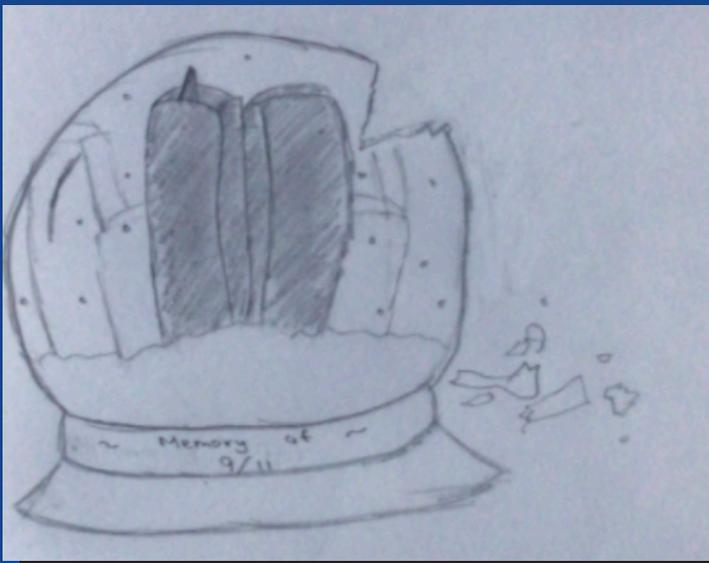
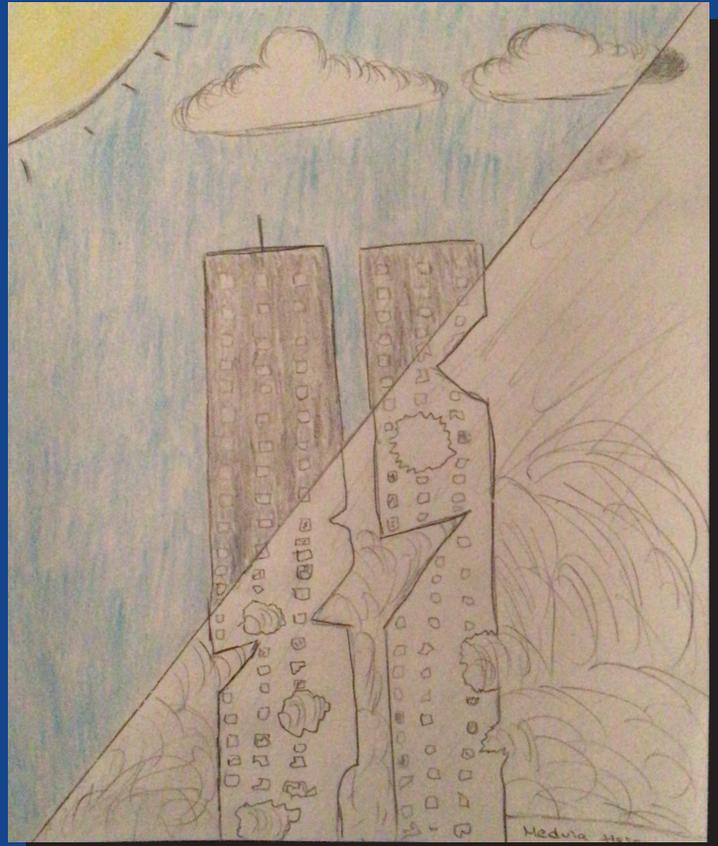
Brianna



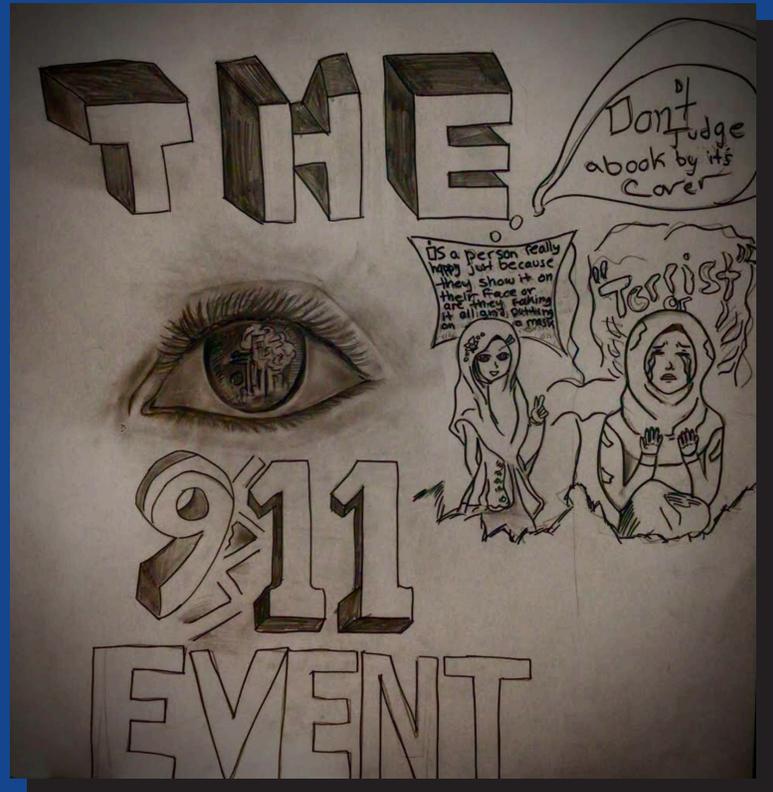
Nurzahan Chowdhury



Medula Hassan



Neshita Debi



Vivian Chen

Create a written, drawn, or mixed written and drawn reaction to the song and video. Make whatever format you choose for your reaction include as many visual or verbal details as you can. If your reaction is mostly visual, try to explain in words what your visual means.



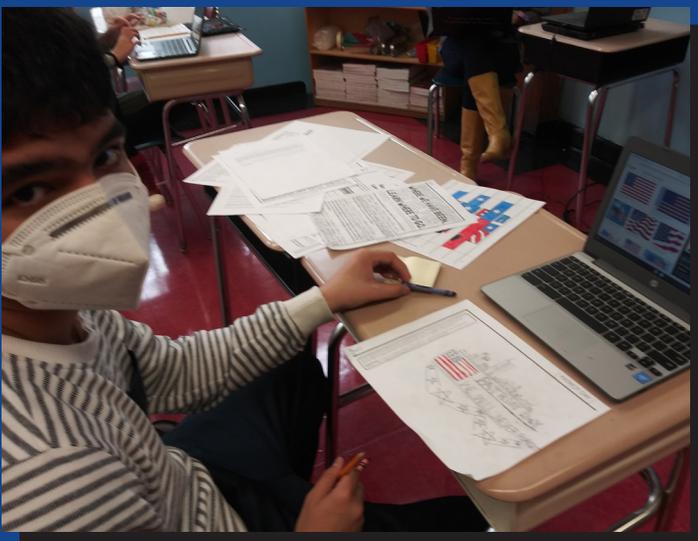
The song I will be talking about is “The Rising” by Bruce Springsteen. The first verses of this song provide the listeners with a vivid picture in mind. The lyrics, “Can’t see nothin’ in front of me/Can’t see nothin’ coming up behind/I make my way through this darkness/I can’t feel nothing but this chain that binds me,” evokes an image of a firefighter being in a burning building and ascending the tower trying to help save a life. This song’s mood seems to be hopeful and melancholy at the same time. In my drawing, I drew two firefighters carrying a person out of the rubble. Because this song is a tribute to the firefighters who lost their lives in 9-11, I wanted to show it in my artwork. The artwork authenticates how the fighter fighters and other emergency workers were heroes who put others’ lives before their own.

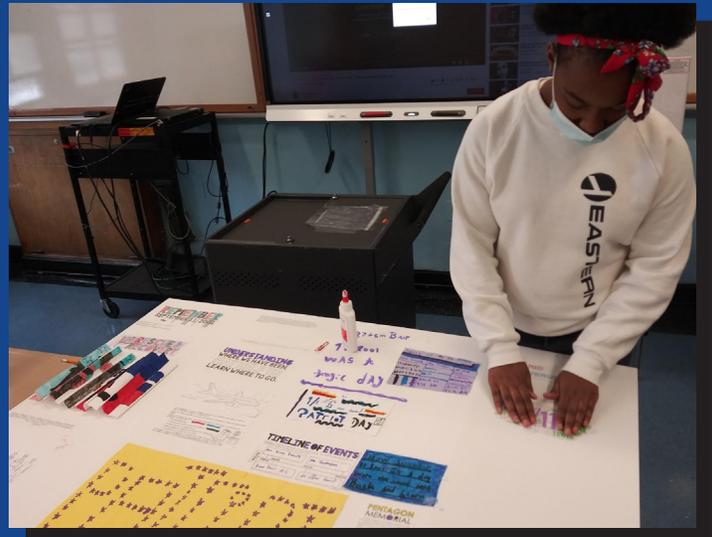
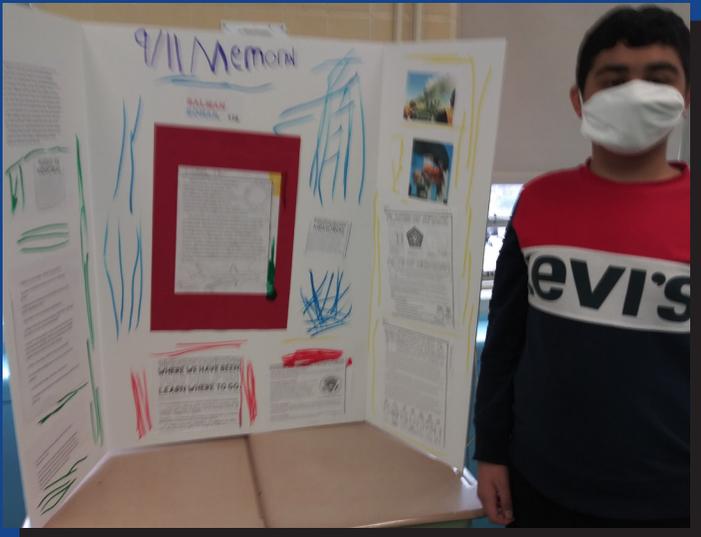
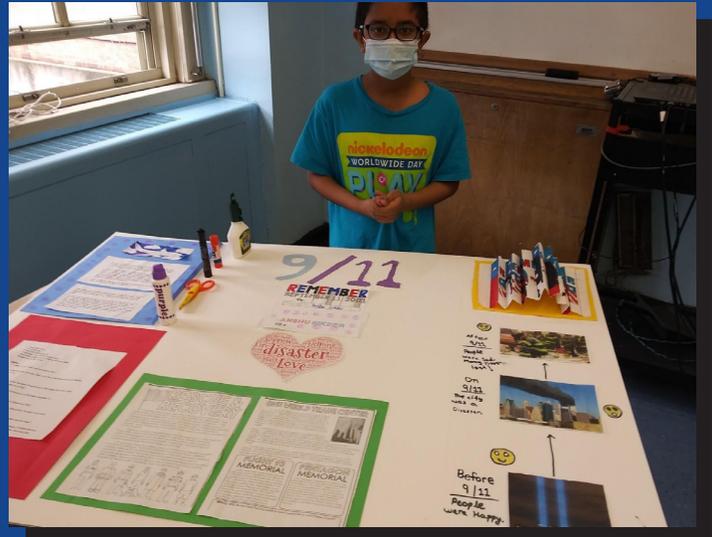
You deep analysis and emotional as well as correct academic literacy analysis of the lyrics serve as a concretization of your dual art expressive and language rich capacity to react to texts. The purpose of this project is multiple. Certainly, Mr. Downes and I want you to correctly interpret the lyrics, but we also want you to react as an empathetic citizen. You do all that plus bring a refined and intellectually well conceptualized art talent to bear. Please continue to focus your infinite talents and emotional connection on all history. Beyond this class we need artists, writers and citizens to make a better present and future. Warmly, - Dr. Rose

Art

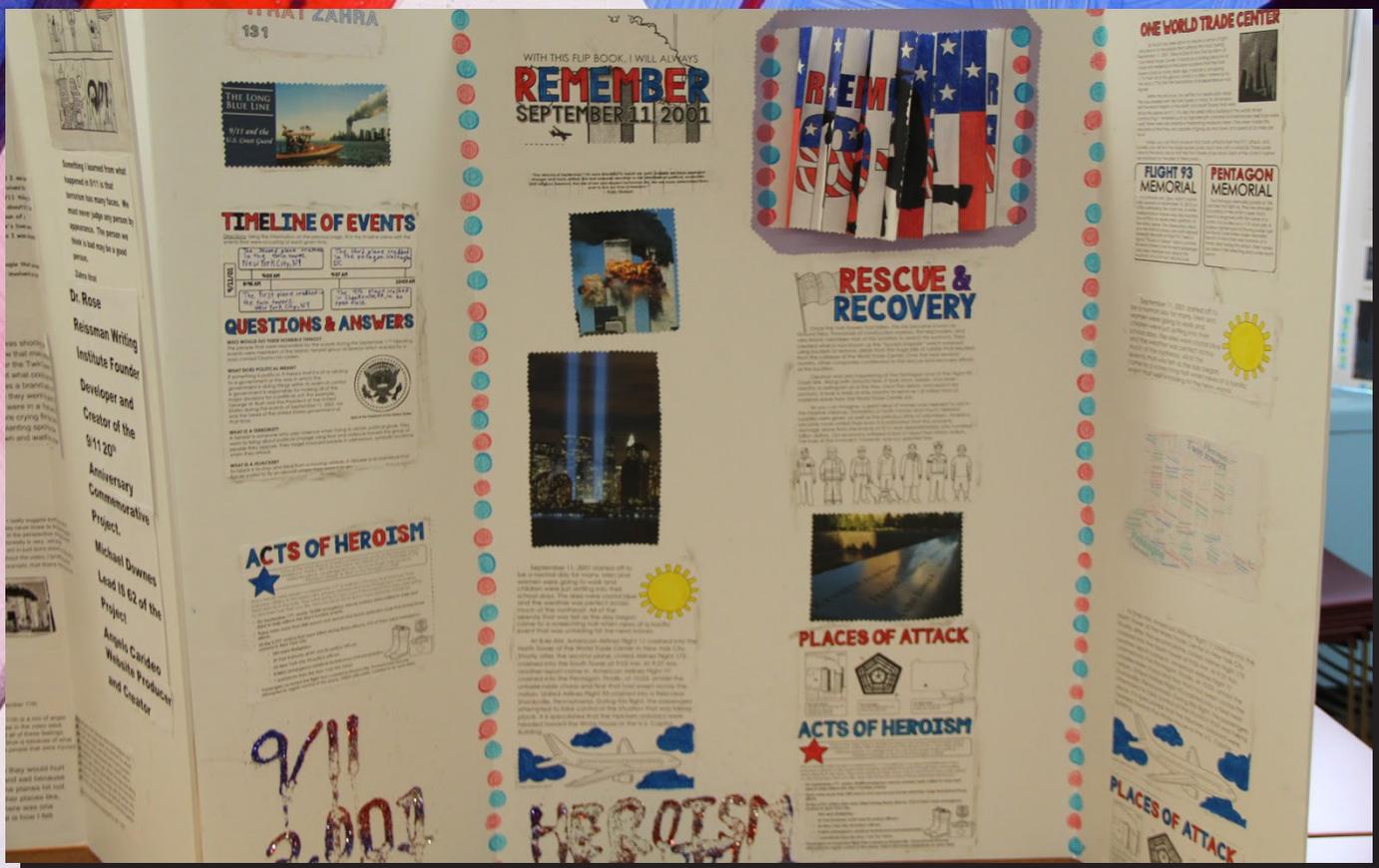
Ms. Xavier's Class

Ms. Xavier gave her 6th graders the chance to individually develop poster board artifacts of their 9/11 research, artistic responses, public domain graphic images and quotes from family member oral histories.





CEREMONY 2021

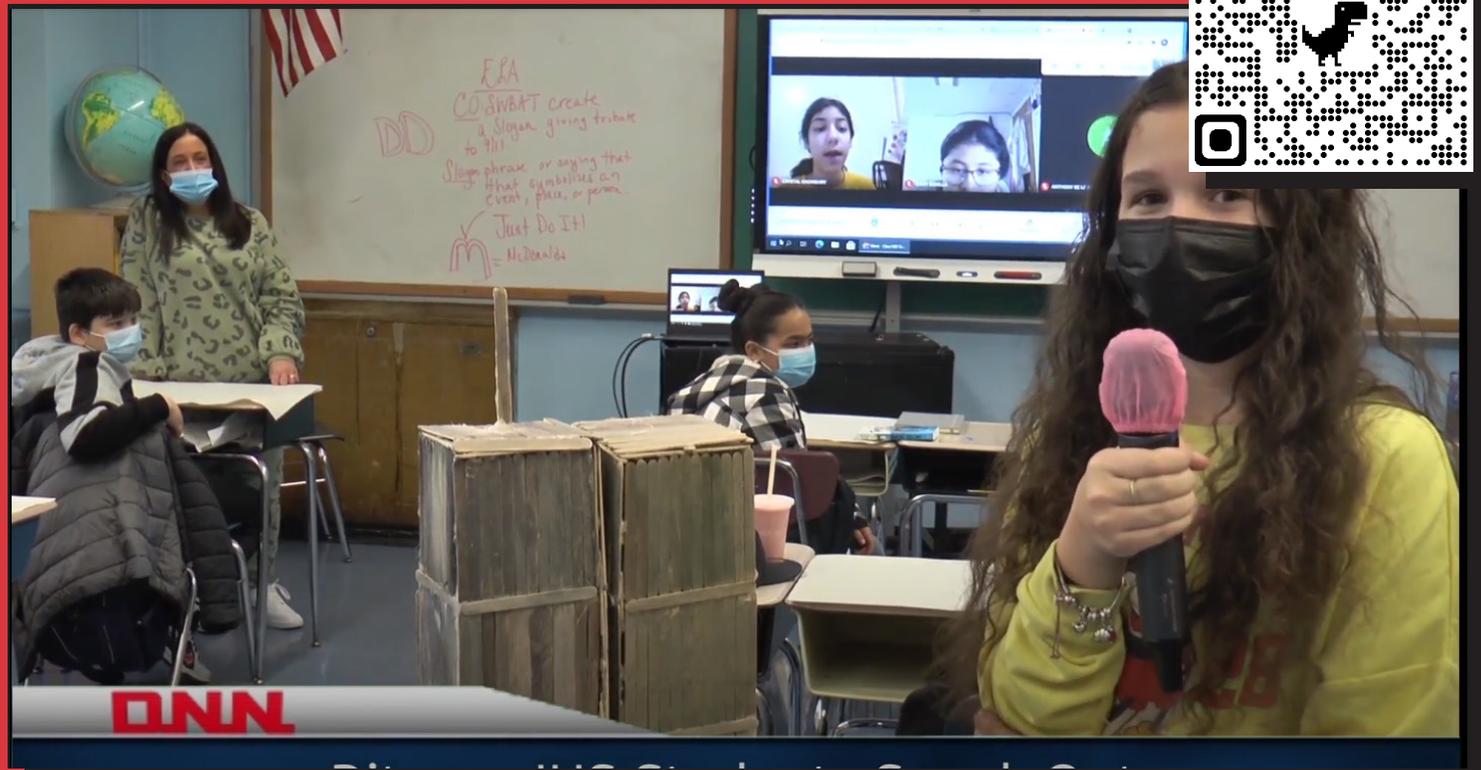


11 Seconds

by Madeline Siu



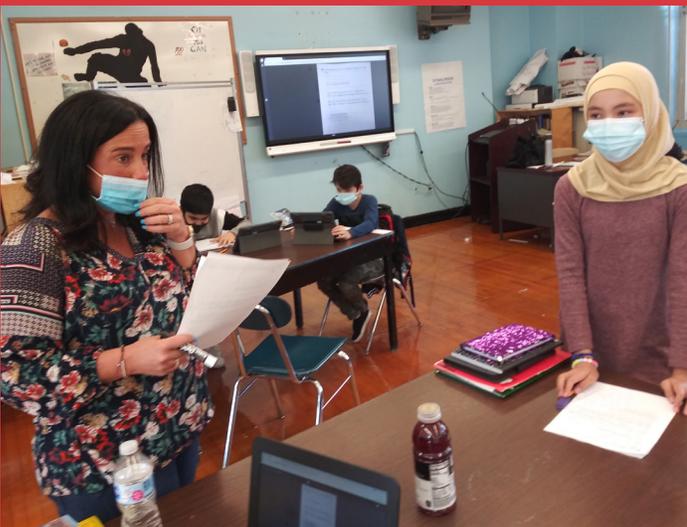
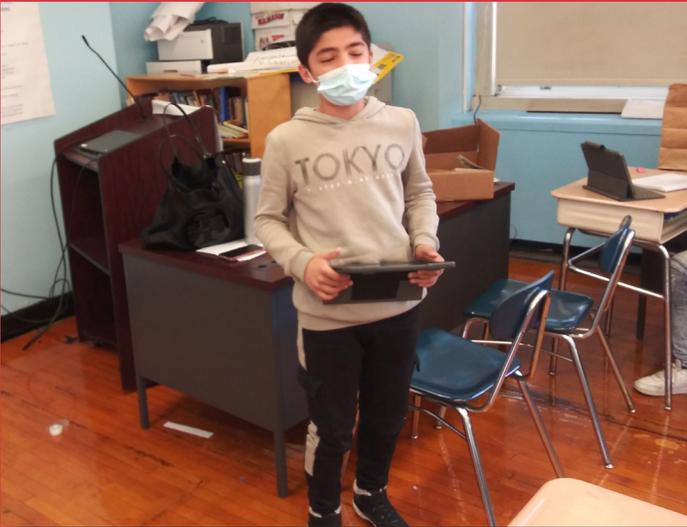
Ceremony Trailer



Ceremony 2021: Student Developers

Mrs. Francis's Class

Ms. Francis Ceremonies Developers for the In My Language ceremony were her 6th grade ESL students. They viewed documentaries, read I survived 9/11 and developed collaborative artwork. Finally they filmed a video ceremony in their own words in English and in other languages.



Before this club, I knew a great deal about this tragedy and the terrible attack on the World Trade Center of September 11, 2001. I knew about the deaths at the World Trade Center and the attacks on the Pentagon. Yet, I never knew what kids who are my age, born after this time period, felt. Some knew little or nothing about the event.

Now as I have participated in this project, this Spring 2021, it feels as if I understand more about it than before.

I now understand both sides of the story. I have learned that there are no simple answers. It is not just “yes” or “no.”

What the terrorists did to those Towers was wrong, but America, as a country, has also done wrongs to other nations.

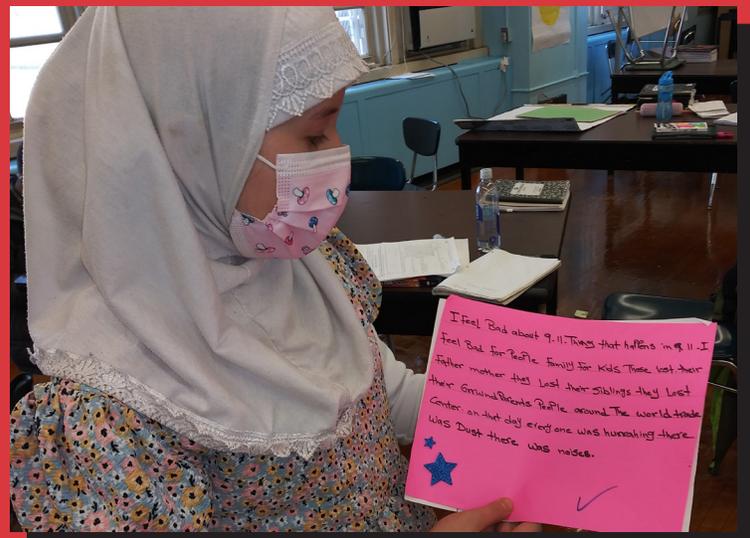
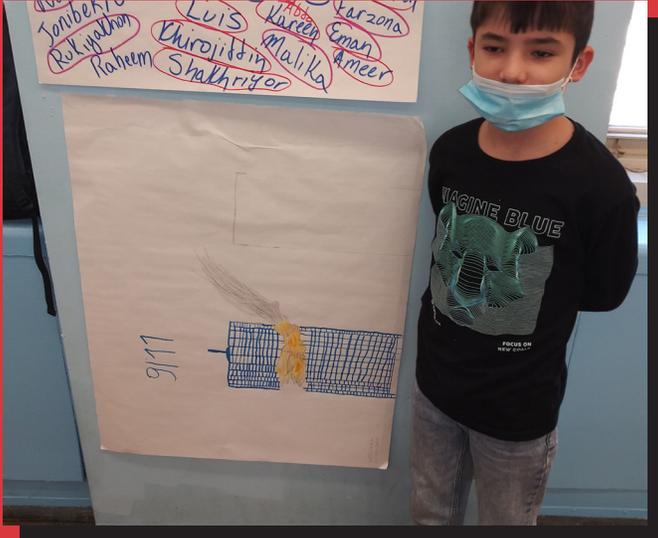
My own mother, who saw the event, was terrified. The people who lost brothers, sisters, wives, husbands and family, also have inner pain. They have scars within that can't be seen.

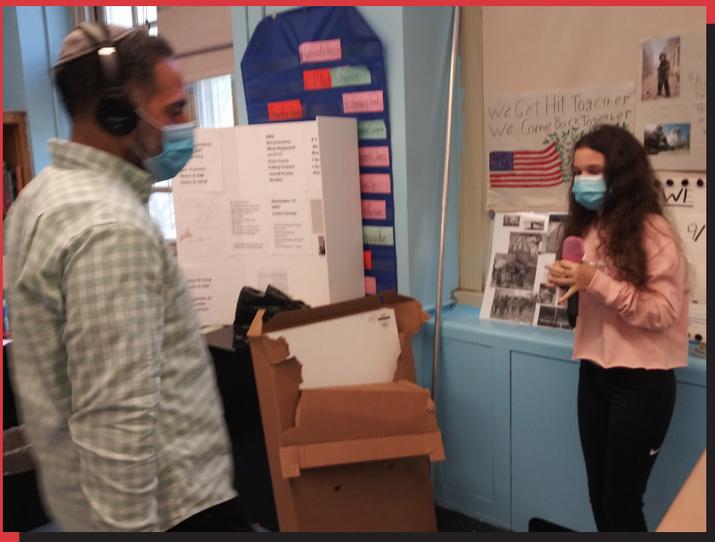
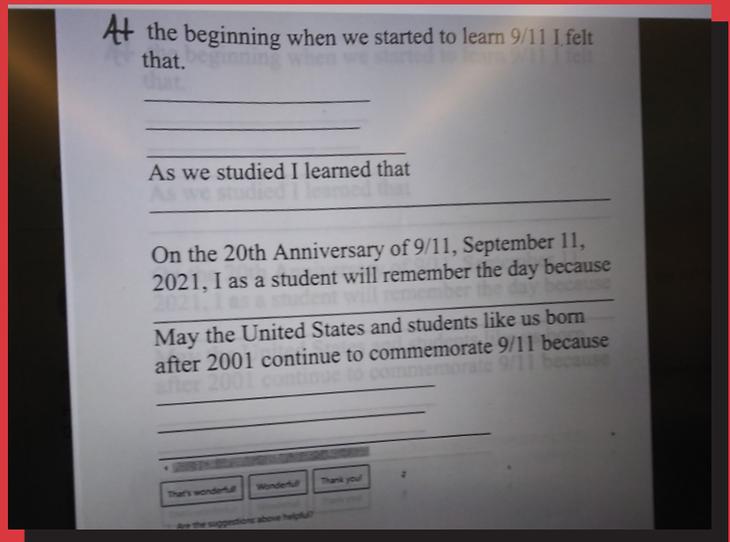
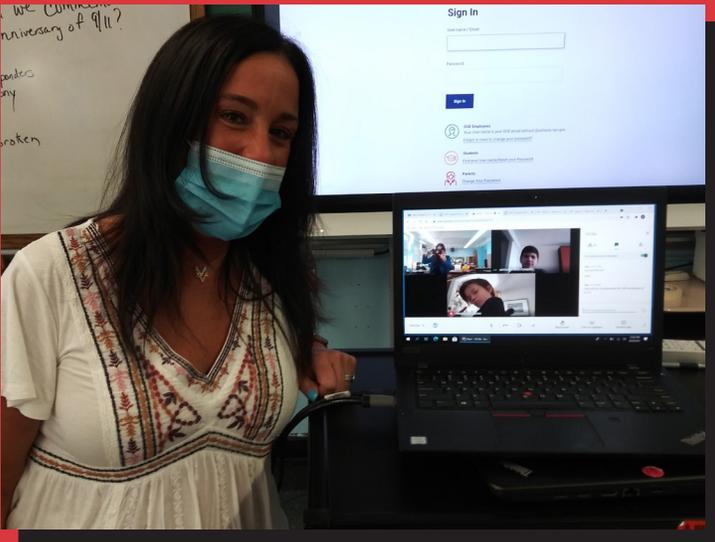
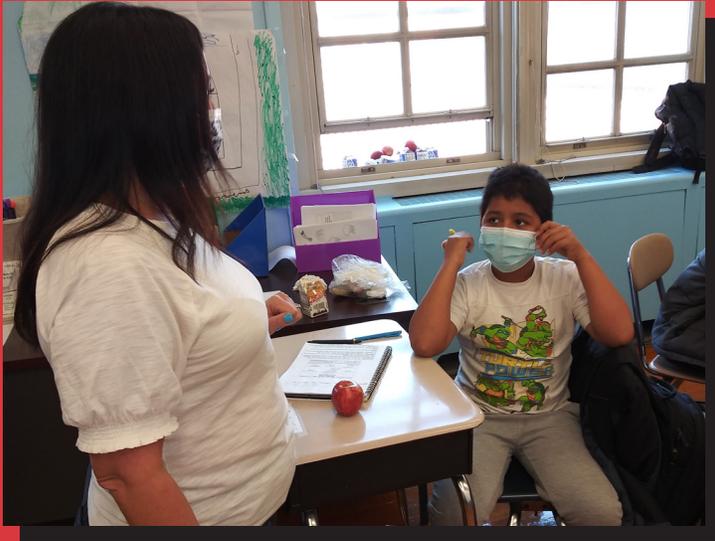
I am not an expert on pain, but I think the pain that I can feel watching this event digitally, the pain my mother went through at that time, and the pain hundreds of others went through, is indeed pain.

Kids like us need to talk about this event, so that it is not forgotten even though many want to forget it, which is understandable. We must all not let this event be forgotten or it might happen again.

The racism and hatred that were brought to people who had nothing to do with it, just because the attackers had the same religion and same complexion as these innocent people do, is terrible. If we forget and kids like us, don't talk about it, the monster called racism and discrimination will always lurk around the corner. It will just be waiting for the next event to get another person killed or teased or bullied.

Please do not forget this event. If we do not forget this event, maybe we can take a step towards ending this hatred that started 9/11 and prevent other events like it from ever happening.

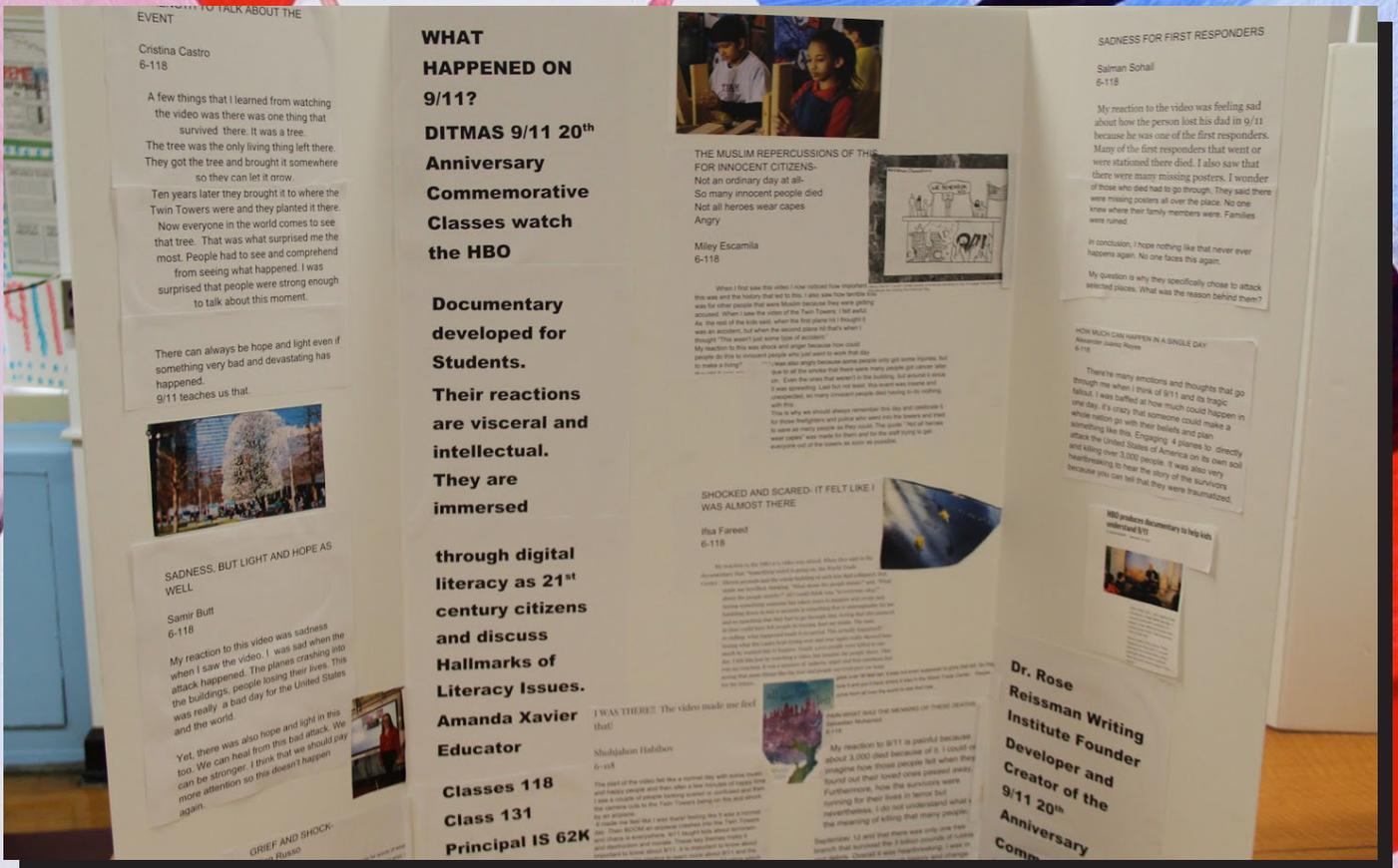




Mrs. Francis Class 6-100 is filmed doing their commemorative ceremony by Mr. Sefaradi, videographer

9/11 COMMEMORATIVE CURRICULUM

*Curricula to implement this
9/11 Project Commemorative
Ceremonies Lesson Plans*



The 9/11 20th Anniversary Commemorative Project is Culturally Responsive

by Dr. Rose Reissman

The project inherently and deliberately is framed to align with Zaretta Hammond's framework for Cultural Responsiveness.

Awareness

The project through its oral histories involve the students in owning their cultural lens of the events of 9/11 20001 as reported by their family members. Through the oral histories the students came to understand what is meant by the sociopolitical context around race and language.

Information Processing

Help students process new content using methods from oral traditions by actually involving them in various interviews with their families and neighbors who experienced 9/11. Through the interviews and the videos (HBO student video) students immediately connect the 9/11 research with culturally relevant examples from students' community and everyday lives. Given the partnership with peers from Bucks county Pennsylvania students will have authentic opportunities through interacting with peers to process content. The project includes exit tickets and formative feedback from not only peers and Ditmas teachers, but also formative - pre and post survey - feedback from Pennsylvania Social Studies educators, Touro Education Leadership students, Iste Literacy Blogspot, CSA Newsletter and others.

Learning Partnerships

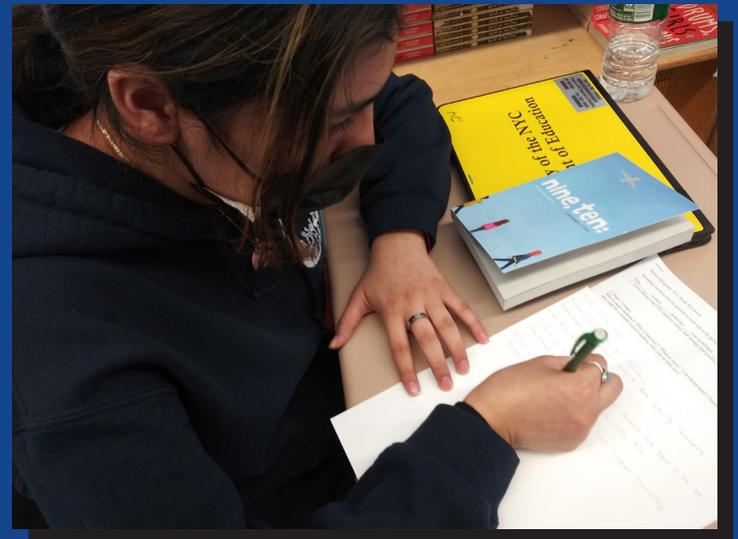
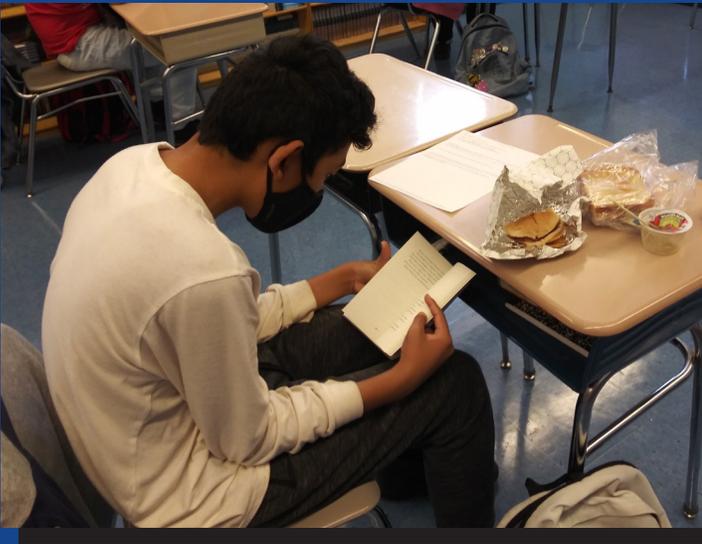
Take responsibility to reduce students' social and emotional stress from stereotype threat. This project deliberately looks at the stereotype and bias threats against Muslims that were the outcome of 9/11 and still linger as of 2021. As the students develop their own 9/11 prototype ceremony and evolve their own project websites they cultivate through these projects a sense of self efficacy and a positive mindset about how our country dealt with this tragedy by coming together. Through their own development of individual and collective poster boards and videos and the ceremony, the students proudly take responsibility for their own learning.

Community of Learners

This project is all about making space for the student voiced videos and agency. The talk and sharing of oral histories, ceremony ideas, poster creation and surveys offer examples of sociocultural talk and task structures.

9/11 Commemorative Curriculum

Mr. Guardino's students served as the book reviewers from their eighth grade perspective. They considered the literature value of these middle school themed 9/11 fiction works beyond their connection to 9/11. They reviewed four key middle school books about 9/11.



Yes, I think schools should teach the events of 9/11 because it is important to know and to understand what happened on that day. It is important for kids who were born after 9/11 not to forget the past because we can learn from it and prevent such tragedy from happening again.

I also think that the book should be used to teach us about 9/11 events because it tells us about the lives of different kids in different parts of our country before 9/11 and how that day changed their lives. The events of 9/11 changed many lives forever, not only in our country but around the world.

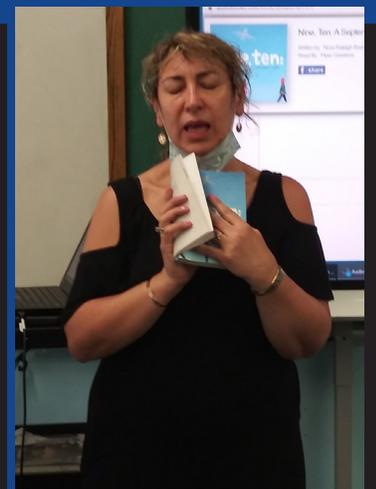
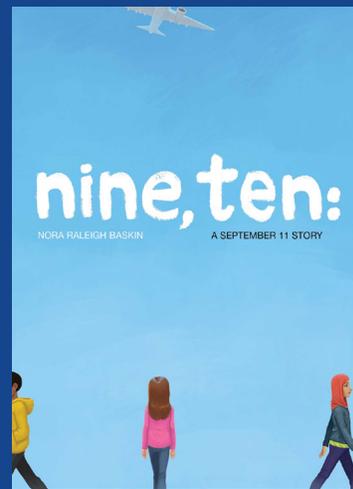
Many things have changed. For example, the security at the airports and other places was tightened because of the threat of terrorist attack. Many people lost their lives. Many suffered and died years after from 9/11 related diseases.

Anthony Trakhtenberg

I think it is important to learn about the events of 9/11 because it teaches students about the heroes that sacrificed their lives for others.

Yes I do think the book would help students understand the events of the 9/11, because it is being told from the perspective of children their age.

Shahriyor Kurbonov



I think schools should not teach about 9/11 because it may be a little sensitive to some people since lots of people died and maybe some of the students in school have relatives that passed away because of 9/11 which may cause them to be sad or upset.

Do you think the book Nine, Ten: A September 11 story should be used to teach about the events.

Yes, I do think the Book should be used to teach events because it is always great to know more about the history, our past and why our country changed.

Tiffany Mora

This book is good to teach kids my age because we get to know what happened back then, so if they ever ask any kid a question about 9/11, that kid would respond well. For kids with different backstories all became involved in 9/11.

Ingrid Rojas

The Names

by Billy Collins



Yesterday, I lay awake in the palm of the night.
A soft rain stole in, unhelped by any breeze,
And when I saw the silver glaze on the windows,
I started with A, with Ackerman, as it happened,
Then Baxter and Calabro,
Davis and Eberling, names falling into place
As droplets fell through the dark.
Names printed on the ceiling of the night.
Names slipping around a watery bend.
Twenty-six willows on the banks of a stream.
In the morning, I walked out barefoot
Among thousands of flowers
Heavy with dew like the eyes of tears,
And each had a name --
Fiori inscribed on a yellow petal
Then Gonzalez and Han, Ishikawa and Jenkins.
Names written in the air
And stitched into the cloth of the day.
A name under a photograph taped to a mailbox.
Monogram on a torn shirt,
I see you spelled out on storefront windows
And on the bright unfurled awnings of this city.
I say the syllables as I turn a corner --
Kelly and Lee,
Medina, Nardella, and O'Connor.
When I peer into the woods,
I see a thick tangle where letters are hidden
As in a puzzle concocted for children.

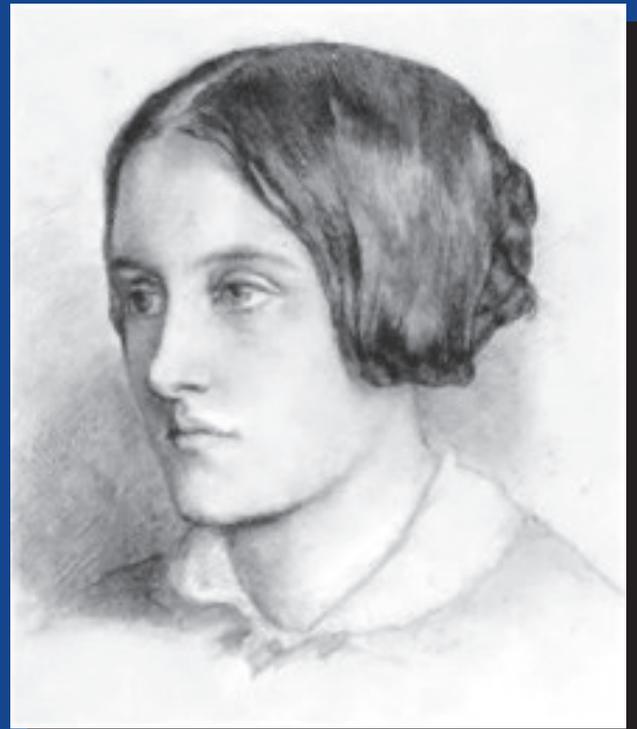
Billy Collins was the U.S. poet laureate at the time of the 9/11 attacks. A year later, he wrote "The Names" in honor of the victims. He read the poem before a special joint session of Congress held in New York City in 2002.

Parker and Quigley in the twigs of an ash,
Rizzo, Schubert, Torres, and Upton,
Secrets in the boughs of an ancient maple.
Names written in the pale sky.
Names rising in the updraft amid buildings.
Names silent in stone
Or cried out behind a door.
Names blown over the earth and out to sea.
In the evening -- weakening light, the last swallows.
A boy on a lake lifts his oars.
A woman by a window puts a match to a candle,
And the names are outlined on the rose clouds --
Vanacore and Wallace,
(let X stand, if it can, for the ones unfound)
Then Young and Ziminsky, the final jolt of Z.
Names etched on the head of a pin.
One name spanning a bridge, another undergoing
a tunnel.
A blue name needled into the skin.
Names of citizens, workers, mothers and fathers,
The bright-eyed daughter, the quick son.
Alphabet of names in a green field.
Names in the small tracks of birds.
Names lifted from a hat
Or balanced on the tip of the tongue.
Names wheeled into the dim warehouse of
memory.
So many names, there is barely room on the walls
of the heart.

Remember

by Christina Rossetti

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you plann'd:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.



Christina Rossetti's "Remember," first published in 1862, is a poem about grief, told not from the perspective of a mourner but rather the person who's to be mourned. In this sonnet, the speaker begs a loved one to remember her after her death—but also not to feel guilty if he forgets her, so long as she's made some permanent mark on his life and he remains happy. The speaker's poignant realism (in the sense of accepting that her beloved may in fact forget about her) engages both with the finality of death and the persistence of love.

Poem Reflections

Brianna Cueto Garcia

The two poems by Billy Collins (“The Names”) and Christina Rossetti (“Remember”) are talking about the people in the tragedy, but the way they wrote their poems was different from each other. For example, in Billy Collins’ poem, the way he wrote it sounded very sad like: “So many names, there is barely room on the walls of the heart.” Meaning there is barely room because there were so many people who died that day and the ones who are still missing, which is sad. But in the Christina Rossetti poem, she wanted to remember in a happier way like: “Better by far you should forget and smile/ Than that you should remember and be sad.” Saying that she would rather be forgotten and her family to smile and be happy because they still have a life rather than being remembered and they’re being sad about the life they lost. Another example is that when you read the poems you see a different image. In “The Names,” while reading it, you can see thousands of flowers, as it said in the poem, and how people would cry behind doors. Yet in “Remember,” you can see her already being gone, but she wants her family to remember that it’s natural, that everything will be okay and to not cry because she doesn’t want to be remembered in a sad way. If the two speakers were to see this project I think they would like it, but it would depend on whether we write in a sad or happier way. Billy Collins would like this if we wrote about how the people feel, which is mainly sad. But Christina Rossetti would like it if we would try to help to push the pain away by only thinking about the good times of when they were still here. It depends on how the writer writes to memorialize 9/11. The two poems are amazing and express the ways people feel and there is no wrong way to feel during this time, so the poems are just ways we can remember the day of September 11, 2001.

I like the way you correctly note that since the poems are so much about feelings and reactions to death, readers can choose which matches their emotions and thoughts. A very mature poetry analysis. - Dr. Rose

Arnick Etinne

In the poem, “The Names,” the speaker depressingly remembers the victims of 9/11. Meanwhile, in the poem “Remember”, the speaker wants to be remembered (or for us to remember the victims of 9/11 in a positive way). The speaker of “The Names” shows this through imagery. The poem states: “A soft rain stole in unhelped by any breeze, And when I saw the silver glaze on the windows, I started with A.” This is an example of imagery, the speaker is describing the soft rain that they felt during this time. In the next line, the speaker talks about the silver windows they saw: (which were on the Twin Towers) “And that’s when they started with A.” I think this is supposed to be about how the speaker went outside, and they saw the planes hit the Twin Towers. These are both examples of imagery because the speaker uses sight and touch to describe what was happening during 9/11. The poem also states: “A name under a photograph taped to a mailbox. Monogram on a torn shirt.” The speaker is talking about the missing posters that they saw hung up on mailboxes. This helps establish a sad mood because the readers understand that not everyone was found after 9/11. Knowing that, I have sympathy for those who weren’t able to find their family members or friends.

Christina tries to bring a more positive aspect of this situation, “Better by far you should forget and smile, Than that you should remember and be sad.” She would rather people positively remember her. Both Christina and Collins want people to remember the victims of 9/11 but Christina wants to be remembered in a happy light. She would even be okay with people forgetting about her, if it meant that they would still be happy. It’s like she wants to have at least one positive thing from this tragic event, she wants to uplift others. Even though both speakers want others to remember 9/11, I don’t think they would agree on one way to commemorate those who died. Billy Collins would probably want to do something more sentimental, like go up to the memorial and grieve. Christina would rather do something more uplifting. Maybe we would still go to the memorial but she might have wanted us to write something more positive. Like if someone did lose someone during 9/11, she might have wanted them to write a good memory that they had with that person. Or send some pictures that had good memories behind them. It’s not like she wouldn’t want to celebrate them, she would just want to create a more positive vibe. Collins might have been ok with this but, I don’t think Christina would be okay with Collins’ idea. As

Christina said, she would rather be forgotten, than be remembered depressingly.

You have a very strong sense of the different approaches of the poets. I feel you use textual evidence very well in coming up with your hypothesis as to which poet would approve of our project. It was a pleasure reading this argument and analysis. - Dr. Rose

Samurah Islam

I think the speaker in "The Names" wrote the poem to remember the names, and the impact it has on people, our community and our families. The author is trying to remind us of some people's names that most likely passed on 9/11. When I read "The Names," I imagined it being night time, a small drizzle of rain and a person who couldn't sleep. A person who was most likely affected by 9/11. They had a flashback and names running through their head. The tone in the poem "The Names" felt sad. This poem shows colorful thoughts, even though 9/11 was a terrible and traumatizing event. People can see it as a memory and an event to learn from, even though I understand how hard it can be to move on from such a tragic event. I think the speaker in the poem "Remember" wrote this to show love and memory. I think that they are trying to say even after their death to remember them, even if you do forget about them for a while, they wish to remain as remembered in some way.

When I listened to this poem, I thought of a woman close to death hoping for someone to remember her, because it was too late to save her. I think the tone of this poem, "Remember," is also sad. The writer wants to be remembered by her loved ones even if they forget about her, she at least wants them to have her in their heart. In this poem, the author used "gone away" instead of "dead". Both of the poems are about remembering, but "The Names" lists some names that might have died during 9/11 and "Remember" talks about a person that wanted to be remembered. I think both the authors would be pleased that we are doing a project like this. I think they would agree with each other about it because 9/11 was a tragic and traumatizing event. It deserves to be remembered.

A detailed poetry line based argument for the two poets to agree with our project. Beautifully done and thank you. - Dr. Rose

Raiden Josil

In the poem "The Names," I think the author was trying to write a list of names in alphabetical order to describe how we will always remember them everywhere we go. The imagery I saw in Billy Collins' poem was a man/woman walking and noticing a tunnel, a window, the river, many more places, but all those places had names on them in alphabetical order. I found the mood in the poem, "The Names," sad because he was saying names of the people that have died because he wanted everyone to remember them. An example that I have for it is: "So many names, there is barely room on the walls of the heart."

In the poem "Remember" I think that the poet was trying to explain someone's thoughts; as if it were a last message to someone they care about most. The images I see in Christina Rossetti's poem are of a person who has passed away. Their final words had something to do with one of their family members, or one of their closest friends, and they wanted them to be happy even though they passed away. I believe that the mood of the poem "Remember" is sad but also happy at the same time, because even though the person in the text is dead they want their family member/closest friend to still be happy. In the text it even says, "Better by far you should forget and smile Than that you should remember and be sad."

I think that the poets Christina Rossetti and Billy Collins would agree with the project we are doing, because both of them wrote about the lives that were lost on 9/11. In the poem, "The Names," Billy Collins wanted us to remember the people who had lost their lives in 9/11. In the poem "Remember", the author, Christina Rossetti, would like for us to remember those who died, but if it hurts too much, she'd like us to move on and be happy.

Absolutely perfect analysis. Christina wants the mourner to only remember, if it does not hurt too much. Billy is in full pain mode, far beyond what Christina would suggest. Excellent. - Dr. Rose

Visualizing Students as Real Leaders: One Digital “I as a Leader” Video at a Time

by Dr. Rose Reissman

Originally given the demands of a hybrid learning program with students only in the building two or three days a week and some remote, the concept of students presenting their culminating projects or projects via videos seemed a perfect solution allowing educators could edit these “separate” student presentations into a cohesive “final” cut of a project completed. In this case the project was the 9/11 20th Anniversary Commemorative video. This student-led project was being worked on by a combination of remote and hybrid students at Ditmas IS 62 Middle School in Kensington, Brooklyn. As we carefully “fabric”ed together the various individual videos- shot by students at home often using cell cameras, the emerging collective digital product “suddenly” acquired “art - I as a leader” fact status.

What is meant by this new term?

In our school, while videos are shot for the students to see themselves and to have a sense of their achieving and reporting or sharing projects, they are also a culminating document of a completed project. Often they are shot over multiple lessons as projects evolve so that they record project developed and individual or group work over time. At some point after these videos are shot, they are screened for students in the auditorium or in the context of Covid via the classroom platform being used. Generally given the fact that these videos center on students as lead protagonists, the videos are well received when screened.

But as they gain additional import - as a portal for connecting students who are remote and students who have a hybrid program - one factor suddenly stood out. It was common for both the hybrid and the remote learners. The students who had been told by the teachers that they were crafting a ceremony which would involve them as a young leaders voicing their parts in a 9/11 20 Anniversary ceremony, had through the video they shot themselves- in a way they would never have had even if video were shot of rehearsals on site at school, a way of “I - digital”ing their individual voices and personae as leaders. They literally “owned” their leadership - by their own words and by their creating their own digital art - I - fact of those words.

The students- even those with very limited at home access to digital editing software, could modify or improve their message or the style of their message after their own self-reflection/review. Google classroom allowed them to share their videos with their peers also crafting their own parts of the ceremony or speeches for the project. Despite their

natural self-consciousness as middle school students, these students get a video-realized digital document which “reveals” their speech and visual presence. As they view the self-shot video, they see literally “outside” themselves and the extent to which their individual ceremony part effectively communicates their message or they “messed” up. Peers are supportive since they themselves are also editing their own videos, and do provide viable feedback. Even better, the students, although remote, are mirroring the way that adults shooting videos and creating narrated PowerPoints or demonstrations for the workplace, critique one another. Just as adults, even before the Covid caused them to be remote, would exchange parts of a shared presentation for clients or work peers via email and chat back and forth about modifying it; so too did these remote students become an online connected cohort of project developers curating their own products and refining them for target audiences - in this case peers from Pennsylvania, Bucks County schools and students in the NYC summer 2021 programs.

The use of video reflection is recommended and mandated for teacher development and for licensure/tenure in various states. Teachers need to demonstrate on video samples of their lessons and sometimes state their philosophy of teaching. Principals as part of their certification or acquisition of licenses and degrees in leadership are encouraged or required to shoot videos of their practice/day to day leadership at schools/district level. They are asked to write reflections about this practice and use the videos as a document to help define and evolve their brand of leadership.

Instead of just having students enroll in after school or during school day an extra-curricular “leadership” activity or club, why not as part of that school opportunity, “professionalize” the activity by adding in a student owned and directed video dimension? In this way, middle school and beyond students could as they hone their real world right away leadership opportunities with projects such as a 9/11 20th Anniversary Commemorative Ceremony or a Neighborhood block clean up or a senior center oral history, also be truly “video”ing their leadership “I” digital footprint. Imagine if our current leaders had had this opportunity to start their training while still in school using videos as their leadership tools. Consider how various contemporary youth leaders such as Greta Thunberg and the teen Malala Yousafzai deliberately used videos and social media platforms as tools for their global missions. Open the remote, hybrid and onsite school doors for student leadership training that parallels teacher and principal leadership offerings. Let students get their video “I lead” IDs.

How a Blind Man Escaped the Towers



Dog calmly walking down the building stairs with a Blind Man...



"Losing your head in a crisis is a good way to become the crisis."

A blind man escaped from the World Trade Center on 9/11 with the help of his guide dog.

Live and Remote: 9/11 20th Anniversary Commemorative Project

by Victor Rivero



A trendsetting educator reveals a 'tree' of creative teaching ideas.

Guest Column by Dr. Rose Reissman



In the midst of the 2021 live, remote or hybrid learning confusion, a school in Brooklyn's Kensington neighborhood (District 20) is running authentic project based learning experiences for almost 300 students grades 6-8.

At Ditmas IS 62 middle school students are developing a commemorative ceremony for the upcoming 20th Anniversary of 9/11 which they will author, curate, score and run on their own. The students who are participating, through 17 Ditmas educators who teach ELA, SS, ESL, Writing Talent and Special Needs, are excited to be curators, oral historians, illustrators and event planners for the 20th Anniversary.

The project is being run by Mr. Michael Downes remotely; Dr. Rose Reissman, the creator of the curriculum on site; and Ms. Amanda Xavier, head of the Writing Institute at Ditmas IS 62.

Time to Talk

Oral history is the first focus as the students take the time to talk with their adult family members and friends who experienced the events of 9/11. The students are using: recorders, flipgrid, videos, and written notes to do the interviews and then reflecting using key quotes on lessons they have learned from their oral history subjects about what life lessons these histories offer.

These histories of course reflect the multi-perspectives of the diverse families whose students attend Ditmas. A strong strand of these interviews has been the extent to which the Muslim families suffered not only the NYC tragedy of that day, but ironically still suffer the perception that Muslims – anyone who “appears” to be a Muslim or wears traditional Muslim dress- are all terrorists. This perception of course had at that time for many student families' serious emotional, economic, cultural, racist and psychological consequences. Students themselves—even at the tender ages of 11-14—stated that they and their families do not feel that this perception has gained strength over the last twenty years.

Remotely or On Site

Students have been immersed in the event remotely or on site by the viewing footage of the actual attacks and reacting to the HBO Documentary, What Happened on September 11. This documentary is highly diverse-student friendly because it uses a target audience of

NYC local students who visit the 9/11 Memorial Museum. It communicates their experience of the museum through their lens and features interspersed camera close-up reactions by the students to their learning experience at the Museum.

The students speak with a survivor of 9/11 who worked for the World Trade Center. They experience the charred artifacts of fireman uniforms and a shoe as well as visit the reflection garden with the names inscribed. They build their own towers out of blocks. The relatable under 30-minute video ends with the students back at school creating in a warm school art program their own expressions of painting, illustration, do-it-yourself mixed media materials sculpting – to convey the 9/11 experience and its impact on this generation born after 2001.

The documentary plus other footage of 9/11 transports, through visible learning (Hattie, *Visible Learning*, 2008) the born 2008-2010 students to the anguished, heroic, horrific and shocking moments of 9/11. The video coupled with the introductory, often quite emotional oral history testimony from their family members, inspires the students to (like their peers in the documentary) create their own artistic—be it poetry, reflection, mixed media, painting, illustration or tower constructs.

Songs of 9/11

Michael Downes, the lead Ditmas teacher, juxtaposed two songs of 9/11 – Daryl Worley’s *Have you Forgotten?* and Alan Jackson’s *Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turnin’ that September Day?)*. The students had to identify the lyric arguments made by each song and then decide whether they agreed or disagreed with them. Several students added voluntarily an artistic statement as well as their verbal response. Of course, the Downes’ song approach broadened the immediately accessibility of this project to include ELL learners as well as auditory learners.

ELA Co-curriculum Developer and the head of the Writing Institute at Ditmas, Amanda Xavier, decided the artistic way to assure each of her students was accessed via visible learning to the 9/11 project was to have them develop their own research driven tri-fold poster board. To make this an equitable assignment for various learners, the board could combine: original art, research article printouts with student comments, student curated public domain images and student art or reflections. Paints, brushes, pipe cleaners, origami, twine and origami were made available to the students.

In addition, inspired by the HBO documentary, Ms. Xavier and Dr. Reissman downloaded the World Trade Center Model 3D paper Cut Template. ELA teacher Dina Francis focused, for her intermediate ELLs class, on the photographs of 9/11 and the character traits of EMT workers. These images were reflected in the student poster boards.

Crucial Bridge to History

As schools struggle to return students and educators to the structure of the classroom community, at Ditmas IS 62 20 classes of students work on literally and metaphorically building towers which bridge their connection to immediate American history. They are being digitally contributing, responsive American citizens now. In not forgetting 9/11, they are authenticating 2021 restart- and resilience-building so crucial to education.

We Continue Honoring Those Who Were Lost

by Yessy Peña

What Is 9/11?

9/11. What is it? 9/11 was an appalling event that took place on September 11, 2001, causing death and injuries. The misconception is that 9/11 was just one attack. However, it was actually planned out to be three attacks aimed at the Pentagon, the World Trade Center, and Washington D.C (people also say that this attack was aimed at a nuclear power plant in the east or a presidential retreat in Maryland). Moreover, the media reacted with large amounts of racism towards Muslims. Unfortunately, Muslim racism and stereotypes have been happening for such a long time that it's gotten to the point where it's normal. People were also been exposed to several diseases that are life-threatening because of this event. After all of these struggles and challenges, we honor the people who died in the 9/11 attacks.

The Attacks

The attacks on September 11, 2001 were gruesome, frightening, and traumatic. Osama Bin Laden, the leader of these attacks, planned to hit three of America's great landmarks; he planned to hit the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and the White House. One of the most well-known attacks on the day of 9/11 was the attack on the World Trade Center, otherwise known as the Twin Towers. The attack on the Twin Towers occurred in New York City, New York and happened when American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the towers with 20,000 gallons of fuel, leaving a burning, fiery gap on the 80th floor. People thought that this was enough damage, but then a second plane, United Airlines Flight 175, crashed into the south tower 18 minutes later. The damage caused the Twin Towers to eventually collapse. 2,799 lives were lost. The attack on the Pentagon, the Department of Defense headquarters, was caused by Flight 77 crashing into the west side of it at 9:45 A.M. The fuel from the Boeing 757 led to a structural collapse and the death of 125 military personnel and civilians as well as 64 people in the plane. Furthermore, there was a failed, yet attempted attack, on Flight 93, that is not as commonly known compared to the Pentagon or Twin Tower attacks. Flight 93 seemed like a regular flight, but soon people realized that they were going to die. Thomas Burnett Jr. said, "I know we're all going to die. There's three of us who are going to do something about it. I love you, honey," to his wife over the phone. Surprisingly enough, the passengers beat up the hijackers, who were controlling the plane, and made the plane flip over and crash to the ground at 500 miles per hour in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. 44 innocent people were annihilated, but they saved thousands of lives that very day.



How The Media Reacted

9/11 was a very impactful event, changing the way people lived and the perspective they had. Additionally, throughout the years, we saw the many different ways people would react to this event - whether it was generally or personally. However, the way the media reacted was the most surprising. Although it was one of the ways that this event was spread and taught about to many people, the outcome of this was still very negative. For starters, the racism towards Muslims and anyone who had some sort of connection towards Islam was, and still is, very normalized. This racism was always there, but this event gave people a chance

to continue this discrimination against people who belonged to that group. The media helped with this. Throughout the years, they managed to normalize this racism toward people of Islamic descent and it is still happening today. Adding on to that, the stereotypes that were placed upon this group of people grew bigger and became something that would be referred to as normal. Words like “terrorist” or the blaming of them for this event were what people were doing to Muslims on a regular basis. This was very harmful toward them and still is to this day. Muslims live around the idea of how they were the reason this attack occurred, when in fact it was only a few people. How would you feel if your entire community was being blamed for something only some did?

The After-Math

Almost 20 years after the 9/11 attack, there are still people who are suffering from the attacks. Many have died from the fumes, metal, and debris that came into their bodies, causing several severe medical conditions and many more deaths than people can imagine. People were at risk of, “rhinosinusitis, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), asthma, sleep apnea, cancer, posttraumatic stress disorder, respiratory disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, depression, and anxiety disorder.” However, on the slightly brighter side, we still honor the firefighters, police officers, and civilians who died from all of the 9/11 attacks. In New York City, New York, there is a memorial and museum dedicated to 9/11, with names of people who died, and a tribute with a light beaming on where the Twin Towers were originally established (this only occurs on September 11th of every year). People from all over the world come to see it. We will always remember and honor those who were lost during this terrible event. Everyone has their own way of interpreting and talking about the event, but in the end we will never forget what happened during 9/11.

Frank Siller of the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Tower Foundation

by Madeline Siu

Frank Siller's brother, Stephen Siller, a New York City firefighter, gave his life on 9/11. He and his brothers were going to play golf until Stephen heard that one of the twin towers was hit. So, Stephen rushed there right away. Frank didn't know if he had managed to get there or how he got there but they only knew that he turned around to try to get there.

Stephen obviously wanted to help everyone who was injured or put out whatever fires there were. When the first tower was hit, they turned on his small TV and started watching it from there. Then, when the second tower was struck, they knew it wasn't a regular plane crash, but they were under attack. His family went out to make sure their shops and homes were okay, leaving Frank back at his home. Once they realized that the attack was really bad, they all went to Frank's house to stay.

Frank kept trying to call Stephen, assuming he had his phone with him, but he never picked up or called back. Another firefighter called and said that it was really bad down in Manhattan. Frank told him he knew that. But the firefighter said that Stephen was on a list of firefighters that were missing that weren't going back home. Frank was devastated and told his family that Stephen had died.

Stephen died because of the attack on 9/11 which caused many other people to die. Although some may say they do not connect to 9/11, many people do because they either lost someone that was close or were there, experiencing the pain of hearing that their loved ones aren't coming back to them.





Frank and his family thought they should do something to honor Stephen because of how much he meant to them and that he died trying to help people. They decided to make a foundation. They agreed that they were going to take care of all the work for his heroic actions. The reason Frank decided to do this was because he knew that Stephen had died protecting the people in New York City and how important Stephen was during the attack. Even though most people wouldn't feel the same way about Stephen's death, they should know that he helped save some people and if he hadn't been there to help, more than 2,977 people would have died that day.

I think that people in 2001 were scared but still were still willing to help other people stand up from the ground and shield themselves from the broken glass and ash. Even though less people died in the 9/11 event than those who did from Covid today, people still lost people they cared about who aren't back home with them, so 9/11 should still be remembered and known.

I think people should focus more about the fright and deaths than the terrorists because we should all know that not all people from different countries are bad and will hurt you the way the people in the plane did. I know that everyone is curious on why they decided to crash into the twin towers, killing themselves and other innocent people. We don't have answers .I think we shouldn't keep asking a question for which there is no definitive answer.

Anyway, Frank and his siblings decided that instead of being sad and upset the entire time about Stephen's passing, they were going to celebrate that he helped save so many lives before and on 9/11. They raise money to build smart homes for people who need it.

When Frank went looking for Stephen's dead body, he couldn't find it. He saw the other people looking for people under the rocks and glass which made him more sad because of the amount of people who risked their lives so others could live.

The Ditmas 9/11 Project Rejects “Learning Loss”

by MiddleWeb

A middle school project in Brooklyn focuses on life lessons and legacy to move forward.
Article by Dr. Rose Reissman

This spring a team of multi-content middle school educators from Ditmas IS 62 in Brooklyn have watched as our remote and hybrid students engaged in a 20th anniversary project researching and commemorating the 9/11 tragedy.

Over 300 students in grades 6, 7, and 8 – including special needs and language learners – have all watched commemorative ceremonies and researched 9/11 events through a mix of print and digital resources, oral history interviews with family and neighbors, and discussions with others.

These students, all born years after that tragic day in our city, have been inspired by this project to create art illustrations, models, individual posters, student audio histories, original songs, book reviews of 9/11 historical fiction, and a commemorative ceremony of their own, offering a student perspective.

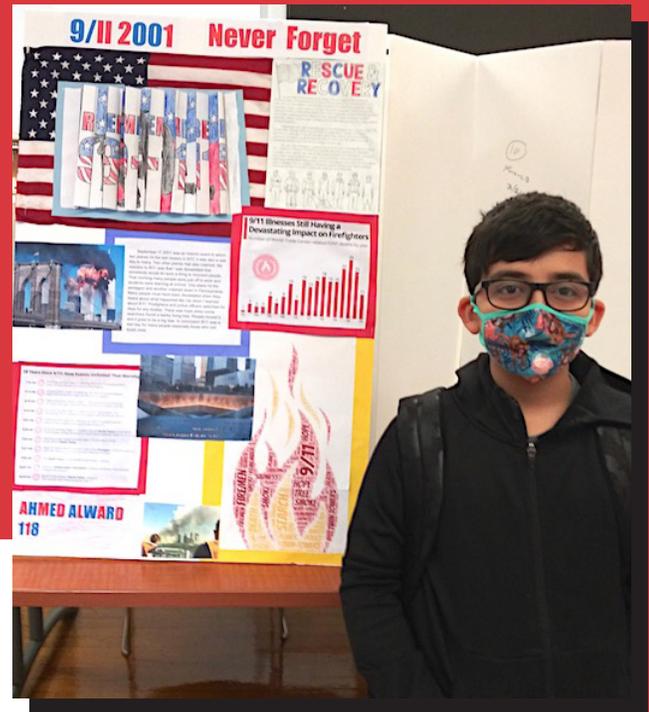
Astonishingly, these student-driven activities and outcomes have continued through May. A pre- and post-project survey of 9/11 factual knowledge and middle school attitudes will help educators understand the gains in skills and knowledge our students have achieved as a result of their dedicated work.

Our Antidote to “Learning Loss”

Our success with this project (supported by our data) has prompted our school to recommend this PBL model to other NYC schools for their funded summer enrichment programs. There’s lots of hands on, student-driven learning, and the model includes detailed Common Core standards and a curriculum with direct connections to ELA reading, writing, speaking, collaboration and knowledge/research standards – as well as Social Studies standards and digital citizenship components.

Yet principals in other schools are reluctant to consider such a real-world immersion project because they are focused on making up the learning loss caused by the pandemic.

Has there been learning loss, even though in New York City students have had remote instruction from end of March 2020 and are now in a hybrid/virtual phase? Of course. How



could there not be, when many students and new and veteran teachers struggled to master Google Classroom with perhaps two or fewer days training. Even students with accessed devices from the public school system struggled at home.

In addition, many teachers who were highly competent in a physical school setting did not (prior to the pandemic) intensely use digital resources, apps or platforms. As a result, their instruction in content they knew well was often hampered by the learning curve required to seamlessly utilize digital platforms and resources. Some learning loss for students was inevitable.

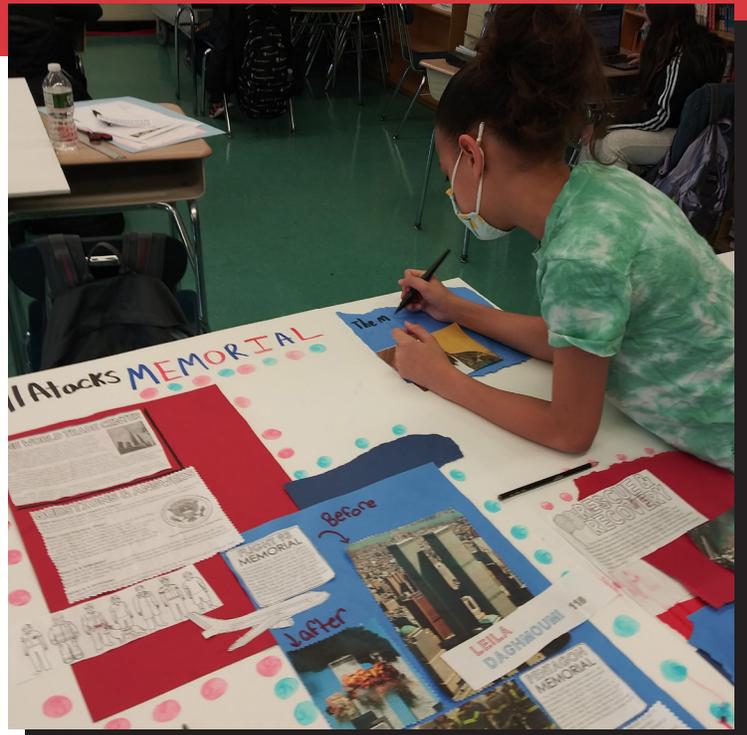
But even given an acknowledged learning loss - now being assessed by many NYC public schools using reading and mathematics diagnostics prior to school year's end - does this mean that authentic full-fledged projects which focus on literacy skills, life lessons and our cultural legacy - as well as digital citizenship - need to be suspended as schools immediately waded into "making up" some skills and content learning?

We don't think so. Our team of teachers at a Title 1 inner city middle school can bear witness to the depth of life lessons, legacy and digital citizenship learning that can happen. Rather than immediately plunging students who returned to school on a hybrid schedule or remained remote into ongoing remedial skills work, we saw the students eager to step out of their emotional and in some cases physical Covid quarantine space and plunge into this meaningful project work.

Covid had brought not only health fears but increasingly real and up-close-in-their-home worries about food security and rent money (despite the stall on evictions). With their parents out of work and some parents undocumented so not able to access stimulus funds, our 9/11 project allowed students and families to shift their attention to another catastrophe when New Yorkers were both grievously challenged but also inspired.

Our middle schoolers immersed themselves in videos and documentaries about a crisis that took place in recent times - intense, but still at a distance from Covid. Many students were able to talk about 9/11 experiences with their parents and relatives and learn how they were affected, locally and globally. In fact, some of the most potent and illuminating oral histories our students elicited from their families came from members who in 2001 were in Japan, Bangladesh, Mexico, Ecuador, Haiti, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, and other countries.

While the vast majority of family oral history comments were filled with descriptions of their tears and fears during those days in 2001, they also assured their children that they had glimpsed persons coming together to help one another, and that they learned lessons





from those days that shaped their future lives — lessons about the value of family love, community and the impermanence of material structures.

Many of our Muslim students' families were able to point out anti- and unjustified Muslim bias in the media and the public mind, including the faulty conception that all Muslims were responsible for or supported the attacks perpetrated by a small number of fanatical terrorists.

As the student participants in our project experience their emotions and demonstrate their growing understanding of this recent history event through illustrations of the falling towers, vibrant posters and other art, models of rebuilt towers, songs, speeches and ceremonies, their “learning loss” is being replenished as they apply literacy skills, gain life lessons from contemporary history about resilience and coming together, and make connections between past injustice to ongoing injustice in their own era.

Gaining Perspective on Learning Loss

What do educators understand about crisis and learning interruptions? Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey have commented extensively on learning loss and how best to address it in various venues, including remote, hybrid and F2F in-classroom learning.

In an article for *The Reading Teacher* (Nov/Dec 2020 – read the summary), they note the key importance of “inquiry projects based on content area learning, and the curation of websites focused on information related to grade level science and social studies.” They advise us to “tune in” to what students need right now. They also note that teachers need to “help students feel connected” to each other and the world in crisis times.

Our 9/11 20th Anniversary Project is inherently about inquiry into recent history. At Ditmas IS 62, our middle grades students have been deeply engaged in the project work, which is intertwined with our Common Core Standards aligned lessons and book reviews of pertinent 9/11 YA works.

The essential question that kicks off the project is focused on helping students born after 2001 make personal connections to 9/11. As Fisher and Frey advise, the project immediately brings parents and families – from the United States and across the globe – into the work as knowledgeable and capable oral history partners. Their partnership is captured in Google docs, Flipgrid, MP4 files and other means – and it lies at the core of this history project which is also about bonding to one another as families, peers, and friends.

In their introduction to the *Distance Learning Playbook, Grades K-12* (2021), Fisher and Frey talk about how learning accelerates when the student is in control of his or her

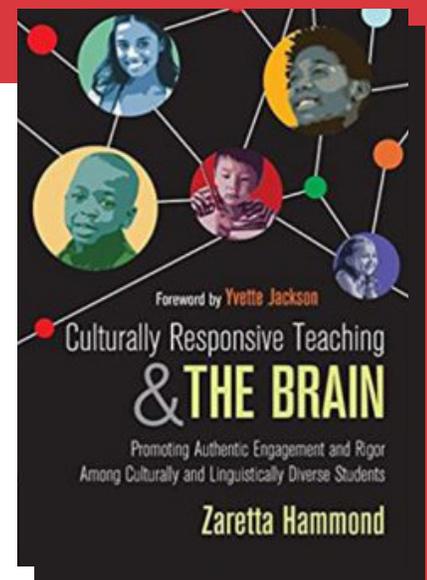
learning. In our case, this project resulted in 11 students identifying themselves as student leaders and meeting regularly in a remote after school session where they developed additional student leadership ideas for a book, original songs, and posters. (See the free Frey-Fisher video series.)

Zaretta Hammond, author of *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*, often highlights the key role of parents in teaching their children, particularly over this pandemic time and beyond. She notes: “We have to rethink what parents bring to the table and see them in a new light as partners.”

Hammond wisely notes that the pandemic’s remote and hybrid teaching “is actually an opportunity for kids to consolidate what they already know and braid it together with their funds of knowledge from home and community to make more connections that will help them to do deeper learning and increase comprehension.”

She writes that “kids are going to have learning loss because we have come to believe only the teacher can be the facilitator of learning.”

But we have also seen the evidence that many students can have a learning gain when they come to see that they can facilitate their own learning and that teachers are not the “givers of knowledge” – we are here to guide and support.



Students and their parents, engaged in a contemporary history project relevant to them as persons and community members, can in fact construct their own learning and in doing so “gain” skills, content and agency as life-long learners and citizens.

Is it not better to fill a wrongly conceptualized, finite cavity of “learning loss” with literacy rich reading, viewing, discussing, creating, life-sharing and legacy-linking than to resort to filler material composed of worksheets and activities focused on remedial (and often isolated) skills?

As a city and nation, we will never forget how we came together and rebuilt after 9-11. Is there not a necessary 2021 post pandemic academic learning loss lesson in that as well? Let us focus on life lessons, project making, and learning that moves us moving forward – not backward – as we help our students gain the power to become self-directed, capable independent thinkers and learners.

Anika Manchandani



The 9/11 project, led by several students and amazing teachers, is a privilege and an eye-opening experience for many students. I started working with other kids on the 9/11 project in early March of 2021. We progressed every day as several students, including myself, started to participate and make art pieces, original songs, slideshows, articles, poems, and much more, to make sure that people will eventually know and be more knowledgeable about the truth of 9/11. Numerous people will learn from our work because we will let people know about, not only the attacks, but the way people reacted, the terrible aftermaths, and the reality related to 9/11.

I was chosen to be a part of this project by being interviewed, as the interviewer looked at my opinions and beliefs, which was the criteria to be chosen. Additionally, I told the interviewer the areas I worked best in, and I was chosen to be a speaker, writer, and editor. A past experience that motivated me to join the 9/11 group was my love for history. Personally, history is one of my favorite subjects, especially American history and present-day/modern history. I also have people in my life that have experiences with/related to 9/11. Based on these facts, this motivated me to learn about 9/11 and stay in the group. 9/11 plays a part in my life and I never knew about the critical facts related to 9/11; I wanted to learn more about 9/11 and America's history. Moreover, the 9/11 group is working remotely by meeting on an online video-chat system called Google Meet. We meet every Wednesday at around 2:30 for roughly an hour and fifteen minutes. My leadership goals for next year are to join more clubs, teams, and groups with my colleagues, and possibly, make a group of my own to help people learn about events in the past, present, and future.

I am passionate about learning more about the world around us and its history. I love to play badminton, cook/bake new foods, and knit. One thing you need to know about me is that I will usually have my head in the pantry eight hours a day.

Nurzahan Chowdhury



I am the student leader of this 9/11 project. I began working on this project in January 2021. The progress of this project has been astonishing. Originally, I was the first one of my group to join this project. In the beginning, I was doing little tasks for the project. Some of these tasks consisted of making some artwork, and a slideshow. After a while of doing this on my own, Dr. Rose told me to recruit other student members. I did just that, selecting 11 other students to join. Soon after, I was told that I was their leader, that I would be the one in charge of them. Once this project is going to be public, other students, and adults can learn so much. Students can learn about 9/11, and the things that schools didn't teach them. They can also learn that even though they were students, they can do so much! Adults can learn about the capabilities we students have, and maybe even learn some things they didn't know about 9/11.

The way I was selected for this project, and the role I have (student leader) is very interesting. I had worked with Dr. Rose in the 6th grade, and got back in touch with her when I wanted to share one of my stories with her. Which I did, although there were problems with the view settings. Dr. Rose told me a few times about some opportunity that she, and my Social Studies teacher Mr. Downes would be giving me. I was intrigued, and excited. After a week or so of wondering what this opportunity was, Dr. Rose finally told me. She offered me the role of student leader in a 9/11 project that was being done by kids, and supervised/run by adults.

I was nervous at first, but soon remembered all of the other things I did in the 6th grade. Some of these leadership tasks consist of; working in a Miko Robot project, in which I made a 32 page comic book, being in debate, being in DNN, and my passion for writing. I got involved with this project/extra leadership work because I saw an opportunity to spread knowledge, to evolve my leadership skills, and to show everyone what I can do. The title of this project didn't just motivate me to join, but knowing that not only would I be learning about 9/11, I would allow others to as well. I stayed in this project because of the people I now lead. They all are brilliant, and have

gigantic voices that I'm eager to listen to. This group is a remote group, so we do things at our own homes. We have a Google Classroom, in which I am a teacher/in charge of. That's where I make all of the announcements. We have weekly meetings on Wednesdays. During these meetings we discuss different things, and sometimes share our work. I also make slideshows for these meetings, we do the activities on them together. When my group members have private questions, they email me. Some of them message me through google hangouts. My future leadership goals for next year is to continue working on projects with Dr. Rose, and Mr. Downes, and to continue growing as a leader. I also wish that along with my evolving roles, people would read my stories that I write.

I have been writing since the age of 9, but they were more of little stories. Now, I continue that passion, but I also write about things happening in the world, such as 9/11.

I like to draw many things, all focusing more on cartoon drawings. My drawing skills were put to good use with this 9/11 project, creating pieces with emotions.

You can find me sitting on a tree branch, hanging out with nature, with a book and pencil in my hand. Though, you might see me hug the tree. No, I am not just hugging it because nature is awesome, but because I really don't want to fall off. Why did I come up here in the first place?

Hafsa Rehman



My perspective on this project is that it is something that is helping me to better understand and be well-informed of the events of 9/11. I also view this project as something that can be a contribution to the many works done on 9/11, to help people learn about it, to help people discover new ideas and facts about 9/11, to help people with supporting their new claims on 9/11 with evidence, and to commemorate 9/11. I started working on this project a little while after I was nominated. I feel that by working on this project I have, and am, discovering new things about 9/11, and issues related to it. Lastly, other people and schools that can learn from this project can be Ditmas and other schools around the world, students from Ditmas and other schools around the world, citizens of the U.S., and other nations, and educators around the world.

I was nominated/selected to be a part of this project through an interview. The past experiences, and passions that prepared me to be a part of this project are past controversial experiences that I've had with people due to my religion. The passions that prepared me to be a part of this project were my passions for studying US history and doing research. I got involved in extra leadership work because I wanted to further develop my leadership and creativity skills. The idea beyond the title that motivated me to join the group, and stay, was the topic itself. I could make connections to it as it plays a huge role in my life. The topic, 9/11, plays a huge role in what people think of my character, which motivated me to join the group and stay so that I can find out why people thought, or interpreted me in that way. To add on, since we're remote, the group communicates through Google Meets, which are held once a week, Google Classroom, and gmail. Lastly, my leadership goals for next year are to work on my collaborative skills, and to do more research on the political and religious aspect of 9/11 and others similar to 9/11 in U.S. history.

One subject that I do well in is Social Studies. Also a skill that I have is to communicate with people fluently. You can find me doing research on a roller coaster.

Zora Citerman



Hi, I'm Zora! Being a part of this project focusing on 9/11 has really helped me to realize what leadership is and what it means to be a leader. I think that leadership is being able to inspire people and guide them. I think that to be a leader, you often have to take charge when no one else will. You have to figure things out on your own, and be able to do it all while leading other people. I would like to thank Nurzahan for being an amazing leader for this project. I think she has inspired everyone who has worked with her!

I started working on this project in early March. It has progressed greatly since then. In fact, the work created is even being put into a book! I think other students, adults, and schools can learn that it is important to teach/learn about 9/11, even if it means doing it outside of school. 9/11 had such profound impacts that it seems ridiculous to not learn about it.

I was nominated to be a part of this project by Nurzahan after an interview with her. I think my past experience with debate prepared me to be a part of this project. I think this because both require lots of research and being prepared. I got involved with this extra leadership work and decided to stay with it because I think teaching about 9/11 and spending time on it is very important. Surprisingly, it is not that hard for the group to work remote. Lastly, I have not yet thought about my future leadership goals for next year.

I am 13 and my favorite subject in school is Ela. I like to read, draw, act and sing! On a Saturday morning, you may also likely find me knitting!

Neshita Debi



I started working on this 9/11 project a little while after I was selected and nominated to work on this project. This 9/11 project progressed so much and it's still doing so well and the members and leaders are doing an amazing job with their research, poems, songs, interviews, and lastly beautiful artwork pieces. Other students, adults, and schools can learn from our work that the events of 9/11 were significant memorial events in human history that should be remembered. Many people have lost their families, loved ones, and closest friends as a result of the disaster.

Although many people have been vulnerable to mental and physical violence as a result of this incident, it has had a long-term negative effect on Muslim prejudice. And that leaves to all races because you shouldn't judge or you shouldn't judge people at all based on their nationality or ethnicity because it all depends on what kind of person they actually are.

Nobody is only bad and good, but both because none of us are perfect and it's okay since we're all human. Also 9/11 has had an influence on society and culture in general, in addition to politics and economics. Increased emphasis on personal life and time spent with relatives, increased religious education, and increased displays of patriotism such as the flying of American flags were all immediate responses to 9/11.

I was nominated/selected to be a part of this project through an interview. The past experiences, and passions that prepared me to be a part of this project were my past controversial experiences since I have gone through a lot during my childhood so I said to myself "Why not share my experiences coping with bullying, self-hatred, and discrimination with those who have been dealing with these issues for a long time, and help them love themselves and learn to embrace and forgive the people and environment in which they find themselves? Despite how difficult it may be, it is better to do so than to remain in a mentality dominated by negative, manipulating emotions, which is unhealthy in and of itself. And to always know that when bad things are happening, good things could happen as well."

The passions that prepared me to be a part of this project were my passions for drawing meaningful artwork pieces, studying different parts of history, their perspective on it and as well as doing research.

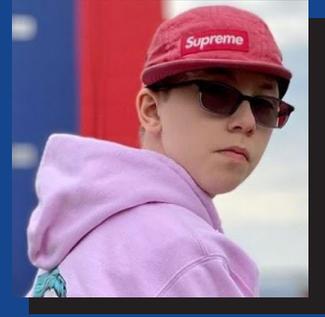
Since I wanted to improve my leadership and innovation skills, I took on extra leadership jobs. Further than the title, the event itself, which I could make connections to because it plays a massive role in my life, as the topic, 9/11, plays a huge role in what people think of my personality and appearance since in my life I have been judged by many people when they didn't even know I was going through.

In which this encouraged me to join the group and stay so that I could find out why people assumed, or viewed me in that way. In addition, since we're all remote, we use Google Meets, Google Classroom, and gmail to connect and talk to each other. As well, our meetings are held once a week.

Lastly, my leadership goals for next year are to continue to keep working on Inspiring and motivating others through my work while wanting them to learn from it as well, and also to make more beautiful meaningful artworks and self experiences document and as well always make them very philosophy to help others who are going through mentally and physically draining situations throughout themselves and the environment there in.

One subject I do really well in is math. Also the skills that I have is that I could sing, dance, draw, exercise and really have good communication skills with talking to different people. You'll probably find me talking in my sleep since I don't shut up at all or even hear me sing while I'm still sleeping. Yeah I'm that kind of person.

Miles Waisnor



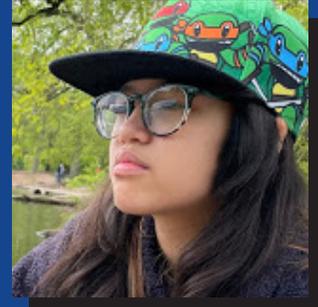
I enjoy skating, drawing, gaming, editing, and much more. I would also say I am pretty good in school given that I have the opportunity to be in this group. And don't even get me started on my sense of style, it is more advanced than Newton's, Einstein's, and William James Sidis'* brains COMBINED.

I started working on this project in late march of 2021 (specifically march 23rd). It progressed in a way I could never have imagined. What I thought was just going to be a quick interview ended up turning into the opportunity of my 13 year old life. We started diving into the history of 9/11 and we are now looking at it from more angles than I knew existed. I think anyone can learn from our work, mainly because a lot of our work has been interpretations such as poems, drawings, songs, etc. Even if someone has devoted the last 20 years to researching 9/11, they can still learn from our work.

I was selected for this project because of things I have participated in in the past, such as writing for the school newspaper. The past experiences that have prepared me for this are things like our critical discussions in social studies with Mr. Downes and Mr. Nolan, and our discussions about books in ELA. I got involved in this for the benefits that it will have on me in the future. Whether it is the knowledge I gain, the opinions I develop, or it might just look good for highschool ;). I was motivated to join because of the learning opportunities and because I am genuinely interested in the topic. Within the group, we communicate, exchange information, and talk digitally all through Google Meet and Google Classroom. I would have to say that my goals are to learn as much about as many subjects as I possibly can. I also want to have as much knowledge for the future as humanly possible.

**The person with the highest IQ ever recorded
(between 250-300 on various tests)*

Madeline Siu



In my opinion, I think 9/11 is a really important topic to be discussing in school, even if we haven't experienced it first hand. I started working on this project on March 4th. Over the time since, I've learned more about the topic each day. Other people can learn that my peers and I are using the time we have to commemorate the historical day.

Dr. Rose and Mr. Downes had a quick day where we spoke about 9/11 and I wrote about a video I had watched. They liked how I explained it in my own words and that is how I was nominated for this project. My passion for music and art has prepared me for this project because in a song or a piece of art, there can be many feelings expressed. At first, I got involved in this project because I watched a video about a girl missing her dad who was taken away on 9/11/2001 then wrote about it. Then, I realized how important 9/11 was and that made me want to be involved. I wanted to join, other than the title, because I liked how Dr. Rose and Mr. Downes enjoyed my work. I decided to stay, not only because of extra credit, but because I heard the way my peers talk about the topic and I like working with them on 9/11. The group takes turns sharing their opinions, every Wednesday. Since we are remote, we go on a google meet and speak there, after school. My future leadership goals for next year are not clear yet, but I want to try to help people who feel like they don't belong. I know there are many people my age who feel trapped or lonely and I would like to help them feel more comfortable around others.

I enjoy reading, mathematics, and singing. I've been writing a lot of songs based on how I'm feeling which helps me with a lot. You might spot me singing with a toy mic, which I casually take from my three year old brother from time to time.

Asher Loeb



My name is Asher and I am a part of the 9/11 project at I.S. 62. I contribute to this project by being an artist and speaker. Due to the fact I was born 7 years after 9/11, I didn't know much other than that there was a terrorist attack on the twin towers that killed many people on 9/11/01. I only knew the bare minimum, and that information was reinforced one day every September at school, along with icebreakers, seat assignments, and essays about summer vacation.

I was never aware of what happened to people in my community, a majority Muslim neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York. I was unaware of the danger they were in, the discrimination they faced and still face today. For example, shortly after the Twin Towers fell, mosques in the community were surveilled by police. Children were harassed in the street. The father of one of my friends at school was harassed at work for being Muslim, and he was forced to stay at home for multiple days.

I was never educated on this in school. In school, the only victims that were acknowledged were the people in the Towers, blatantly ignoring the students right in front of them. Now that I am working on this project, I have gotten the opportunity to be in a space where these stories are being told. I am frustrated at my past self that I didn't look deeper into the small taste of information I got in school. I had the luxury of not having to look into this deeper, because as a white, non-Muslim person, I was not being affected by this on an individual level. Students our age need to remember 9/11 to become better allies to those who were impacted and are still being impacted to this day. Students in my school are still called "terrorist" and profiled 20 years after this event. We need to remember the whole story.

I started working on this project in the beginning of march, from that point I created my first contribution which was an art piece based on an interview with Nurzahan's father about the discrimination he felt after 9/11. After this I worked on a speech about the discrimination muslim people face and still face today. I am now working on another art piece. I think other people can learn

from the group's work that 9/11 is still very relevant today and that the entire story deserves to be told.

I was chosen to work on this project when Nurzahan reached out to me to conduct an interview about the project, the interview was asking about my connections to 9/11 and how I think it should be handled in the future. For me I wanted to be a part of this group because of my lack of past experiences with it, I had a miniscule knowledge of 9/11 and its effects, so when I understood it had impacted my community greatly I realized it was important that I learn and participate. Even though the entire project is remote we are still able to communicate and get things done through our google classroom, email, and our weekly 9/11 google meets. Even though we have had our communication is not flawless we have been able to create so much. And we plan to continue to do this into the future. Personally my goals for next year in this project are to try and recruit more members from the school as well as try and get some of the people in my community to come to the school and talk about their experiences and open up a space for other students to do the same.

When I am not on a zoom or doing homework you will probably find me roller skating, cuddling with my cats or creating the next mona lisa.

Commemorative Ceremonies: Students Develop A Ceremony To Honor A Person Or Commemorate An Event In History

by Dr. Rose Reissman

Task

Is it important to remember the past and honor the actions of both heroes and those who lost their lives? Why? After learning about the actions of a historical figure, current community hero, or event in history; students use factual information, stories, oral history interviews, images, music, multimedia and other materials to develop a commemorative ceremony.

Engage

Ask your students to try to define “commemorate.” Students can draw from personal experience as well as look up dictionary definitions. To commemorate means to call to remember. Commemorating is not just the act of remembering, it is the act of asking others (and yourself) to remember. Why is it important to remember? Start a class discussion on this question. You might also want to inspire and engage students by reading Peter W. Schroeder’s Six Million Paper Clips which tells the story of middle school students designing a memorial to the Holocaust. Have students reflect on their own experience attending commemorative ceremonies. Encourage students to talk with family members about their feelings and experiences attending funerals, ceremonies, or celebrations for family members they have lost.

In community and civic life, commemorations often take the form of a formal ceremony. Let students know they will work as a class to design a commemorative ceremony for a historic event a person you are studying. To ensure that all students have foundational knowledge about what a commemorative ceremony might look like, share examples of events, like this 2017 Memorial Ceremony for the events of 9/11.

What is the benefit of honoring the actions of people in the past or even heroes in the present? Challenge students to define the purpose, or purposes, for their ceremony. For example, they may come up with ideas like:

1. Remember and honor
2. Showcase and celebrate values
3. Motivate to reflect or act
4. Demonstrate gratitude

If possible, have students conduct interviews with people connected to or affected by the event or actions of this person before they begin the design process. This will help capture history from people who actually lived it and will help students gain additional perspectives.

As a class, brainstorm different pieces you may want to include in your ceremony. To make student thinking visible and create individual artifacts of learning, have each student brainstorm ideas using a Cluster organizer before discussing as a class, have each student use a cluster organizer to make their thinking visible and to produce an individual artifact of their learning.

When students share individual brainstorms, you will likely hear ideas like:

1. speeches and remarks,
2. poetry and music,
3. moments of silence and candle lighting,
4. emblems and logos, and
5. storytelling.

Work as a class to develop an agenda for the ceremony. Establish how long the ceremony should take. 15-20 minutes is a reasonable place to start. Based on interests, experience, and talents, form small teams to work on each piece/performance that you have decided to include in the ceremony. Let students know the

final agenda may change depending on information they locate, artifacts they create, and the unique gifts of participants.

Create

Have team members discuss their associations to the event and activate prior knowledge. They may also need or want to conduct additional research using both primary and secondary resources. Students can create a t-chart to summarize key facts and details and create an artifact of their learning.

If you want to provide students with additional scaffolds, share examples of commemorative artifacts, such as:

- Poem - “The Names” by Billy Collins
- Song - “Where Were You” by Alan Jackson
- Collection - Library of Congress

If you have concerns about assessing group work or evaluating student work when they are completing different tasks, consider asking all students to write a poem to demonstrate understanding.

As students begin developing the materials, artifacts, and performances for the ceremony, remind students that individuals bring unique perspectives and feelings, so there is not a single “correct” way to create an artifact or ceremony. Students should also be encouraged, or even tasked with, identifying past experiences and talents individuals bring to the project. All ceremonies will also look different because they reflect the experiences, research, and perspective of their unique community.

Peer Feedback and editing between small groups can be done throughout the process to promote deep thinking and reflection. Have each team share their final work with the entire the class. Work as a whole group to determine if you want or need to adjust the agenda based on what the components have become.

Share

This is an opportunity for students to share and perform their work and demonstrate how their contribution (speeches, songs, poems, interviews, images, multimedia) connects to the community beyond it.

Student work should culminate in a ceremony at your school, your community (even better) or online for an even greater audience. Make sure to secure auditorium space, permits, or online platforms so that your students can see firsthand how their efforts have impacted their community and beyond. You may also want to curate artifacts they have created such as poems and oral history interviews so the resources can be accessed by others in different times and different places. You can find inspiration for what these collections might look like at the Library of Congress’s September 11, 2001, Documentary Project. After the ceremony is complete, ask students to individually reflect on, and discuss as a class, the significance and importance of commemorating this event or person.

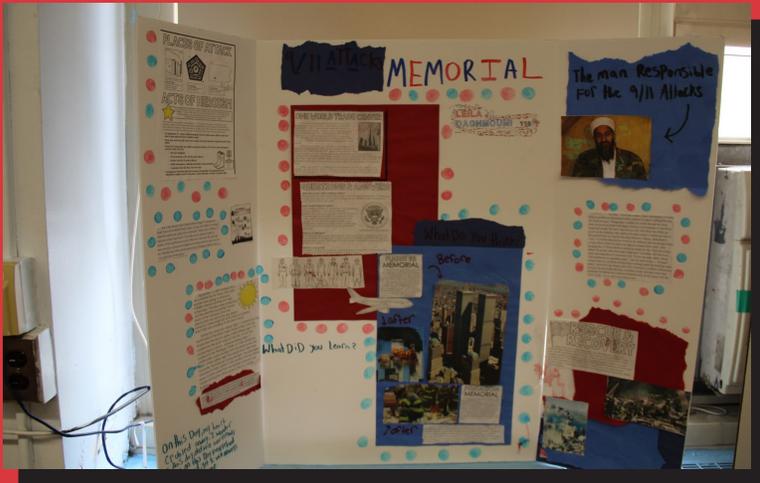
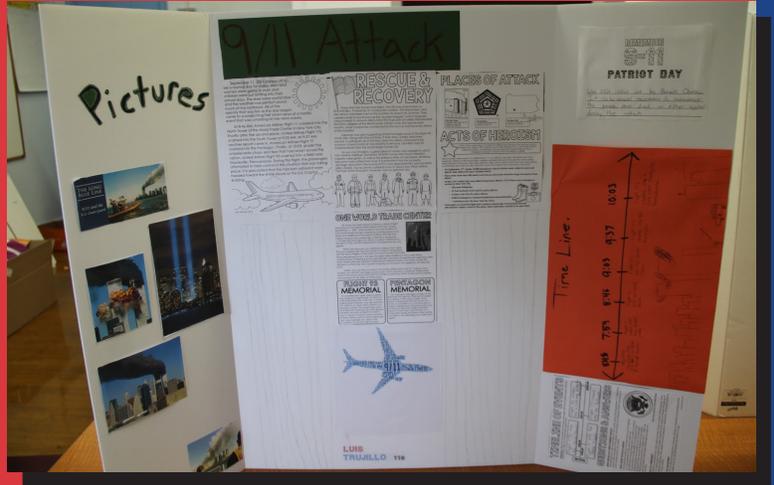
Assessment

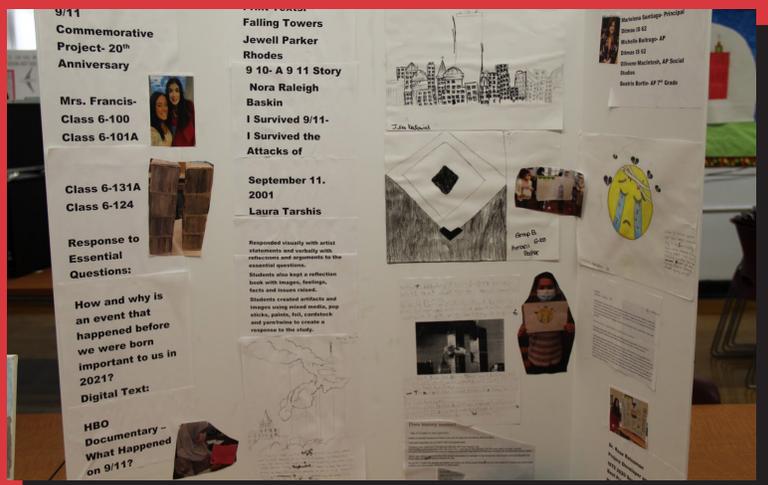
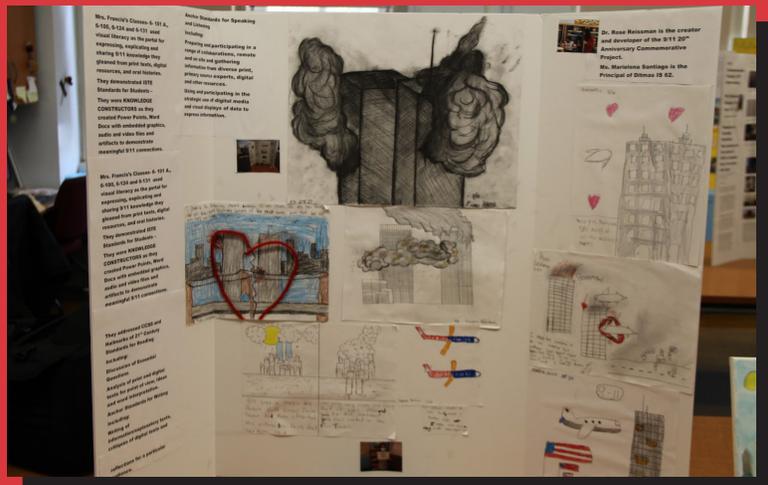
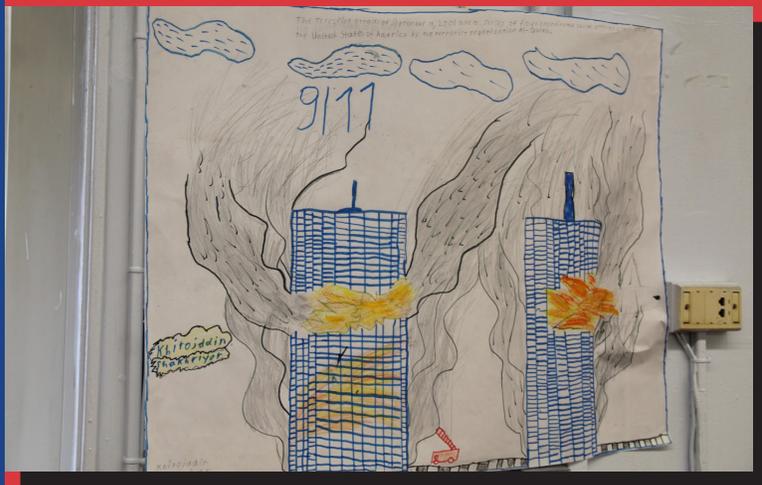
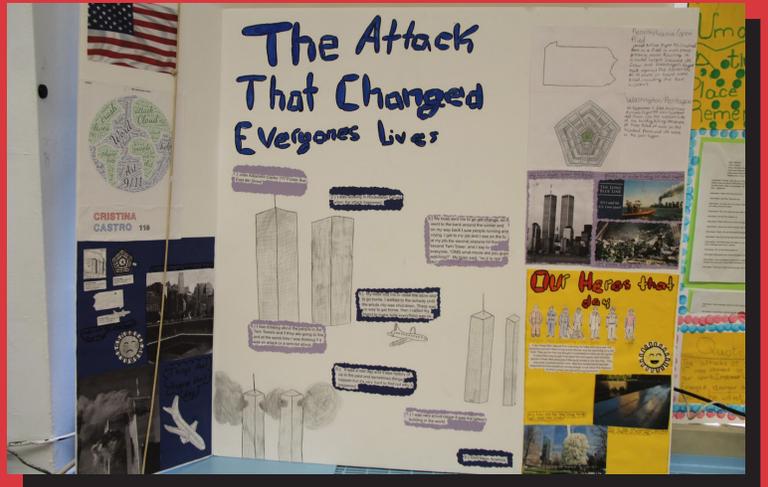
Student work on commemorative ceremony design can and should be evaluated on many different levels. How you evaluate student work will depend on your comfort with evaluating group work as well as evaluating different products and performances created by students in your class.

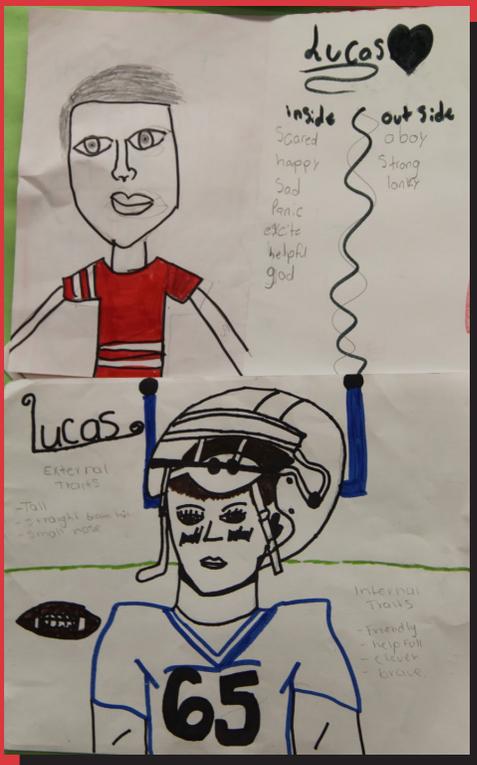
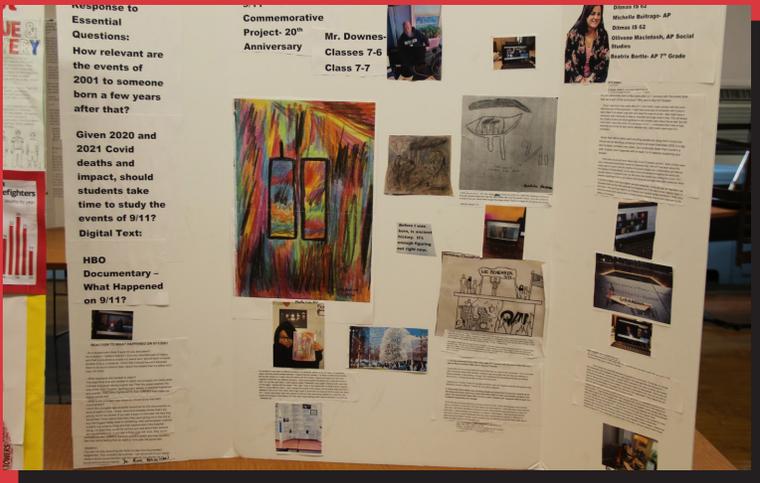
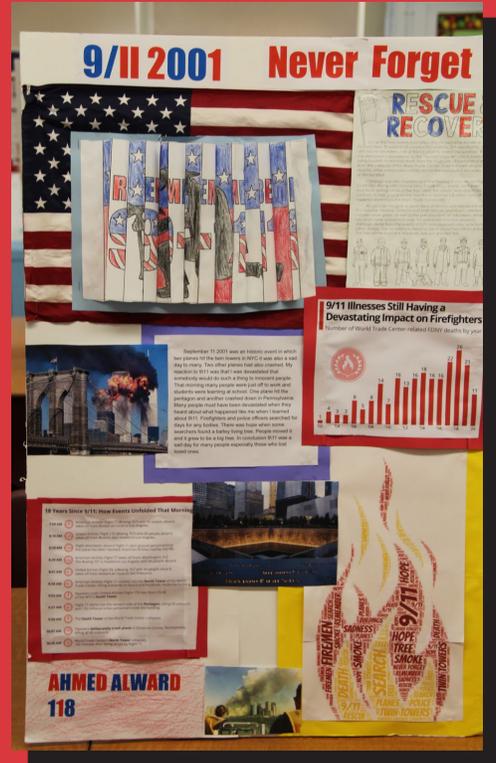
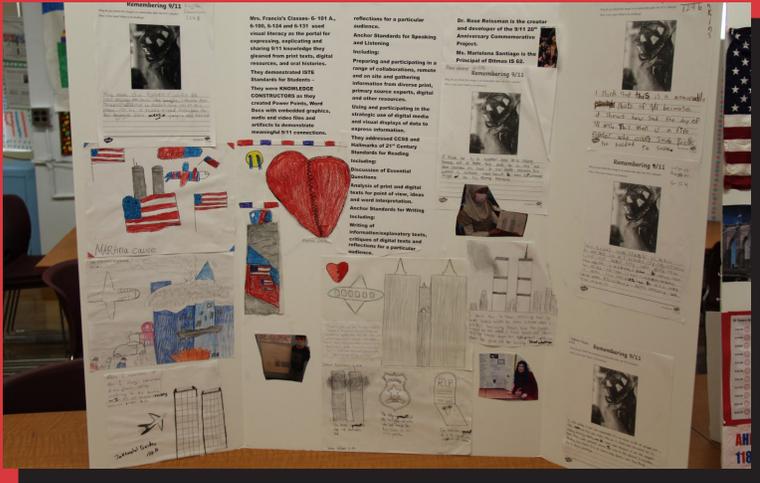
If student work focuses on a single event or person you are studying, all poetry, music, memorials, logos, or speeches can be evaluated for research (notes) and knowledge. If you prefer, consider having every student create at least one of the same artifacts, such as a speech or poem. Using criteria you have established together about what a ceremony should entail, evaluate students on how well their words, music, visuals, and rituals inform others about the event and honor the memory of those involved.

How well team members collaborate is essential to the success of their ceremony. You can evaluate individual students for contributions to their team in areas like leading, listening, organizing tasks, distributing work, and taking advantage of team member talents.

As they are working, conduct formative assessments to evaluate each team’s knowledge of the person or event and how they are tackling issues pertaining to honoring individuals. Be sure to listen in on their discussions and identify any misconceptions and observe how each team member evaluates his or her peer’s ideas with concrete examples and evidence.







DITMAS I.S. 62

