

# GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

12 Littleville Road Huntington, MA 01050

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT:** Wendy V. Long, Public Relations ☒  
(413) 685-1003

**WRITTEN BY:** Autumn Marchetto  
Communications Intern

*Photo Caption: Gateway's Ambassadors to Project 351 (left to right): Olivia Kanner, Nevaeh Judson, Natalie Brown, Jordyn DuBour, Liam Bowler and Carson Savery.*

## Gateway sends six to Project 351

**Huntington** -One eighth grade student from every town in Massachusetts was selected to begin a series of service projects in Boston last month, kicking off the 2019 Project 351. Gateway's Project 351 Ambassadors Liam Bowler (Huntington), Natalie Brown (Montgomery), Jordyn DuBour (Russell), Nevaeh Judson (Chester), Olivia Kanner (Blandford) and Carson Savery (Middlefield) participated in "Launch Day": the first meeting of all ambassadors, alumni, and staff to discuss and take action on serving the community. Eighth grade math teacher Hannah Sullivan and paraprofessional Lynn Russell co-chaperoned. Also attending, and volunteering during the event, were Gateway High School students Victoria Kot and Sierra Russell, who have remained active as Project 351 alumni.

Project 351 took place on Saturday, Jan. 19 at Faneuil Hall in Boston. Initially, it was supposed to be held at the JFK Library, but it was forced to move to Faneuil Hall due to the government shutdown. The Gateway contingent met with students and chaperones from other Western Massachusetts schools at 6:20 a.m. at the Peter Pan bus station in Northampton, where they travelled to the hall, picking up others along the way. From 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., students had multiple activities, including listening to guest speakers, travelling to nearby places to complete their first service project, and even filming a video saying "Go Patriots!" that was posted on the Project 351 Facebook page.

Once they arrived in Boston, students were separated into groups with kids from towns they'd never heard of. "It was pretty nerve wracking at first," admitted Gateway student Nevaeh Judson of Chester. From 8 to 11 a.m., guest speakers—including the governor and former Project 351 alumni—spoke about people like Martin Luther King, Jr, and how even students could make an impact. "They talked about making a difference," Kanner explained. Then, each group was sent to complete an assigned service project, such as painting Boston's McKay School, helping at the homeless shelter on Pine St. or helping with organizations such as Cradles to Crayons and Fresh Truck, making bags of food and vegetables. The activities ended early due to precarious weather conditions.

Gateway students all agreed that their favorite thing about the experience was meeting new people. "It was cool because they were all from faraway towns that we never heard of," said Kanner.

All alumni encouraged the ambassadors to make a difference, and were role models for the eighth graders, who are now eager to start making an impact in their own community. They helped make the day both eventful and enjoyable. DuBour remarked, "Everyone was so supportive, I wasn't used to it."

The next projects for the students are optional, and are generally more local or within their own schools. Three or four more projects, such as clothing drives, will be done before everyone regroups in May for a reunion, which is scheduled to conclude with a march from first responders.

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