

Seeking to comprehend September 11: Students connect personally with those at Ground Zero



In the aftermath of the World Trade Center attacks, many Americans asked: Why? Who are we? How will we move forward? For the Village of Suffern, N.Y., just 35 miles from Ground Zero, these questions were all too real; Suffern lost 64 residents.

Miles away, students in Indiana and Michigan sought a way to connect personally with those close to the attacks. Through the Vision Athena network distance learning equipment installed at Penn High School in Mishawaka, Ind., students from Penn and Brandywine High School of Niles, Mich., participated in a “face-to-face”

discussion with Suffern residents. A New York City Police Department representative, the widow and daughter of a fallen New York fireman, Suffern High School students, a local newspaper journalist, and businessmen and women who worked in and around the World Trade Center all shared their experiences. For the young men and women from the Midwest, the discussion was emotional and intense. It was a firsthand opportunity to listen to the real human experiences of September 11.

Impact on learning

- Provided for dynamic learning and understanding through collaborative, substantive discussions.
- Added a new dimension to the curriculum, allowing for a greater exchange of information than previously possible.
- Allowed for integration of real-time information and ideas that challenge students to generate new understandings.

Event Stats:

Participating schools:

Penn High School, Mishawaka, Ind. (host); Brandywine High School, Niles, Mich.; Suffern High School, Suffern, N.Y.

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“...without this technology, we would not have been able to share such experiences with students and teachers. You cannot put a price tag on this kind of a program.”

– Harvey Hurst, Penn High School

