

## Memory Lane

By Vic Dibella

Benjamin Stoddert Middle School students have filled a void in their community, by linking the senior citizen population and "future" leaders. Through visiting the local assisted living facility four times a year, students formed close relationships with the "memory lane" residents (Alzheimer patients) and plan to strive to continue their service to the community in years to come.

### Best practices:

- Students participated in hand-on activities with the residents, such as pumpkin decorating during Halloween, Christmas card decorating and writing. The time students shared at the facility was cherished by the residents.
- This project enabled our students to develop citizenship skills while enhancing their compassion towards a segment of society that young people often seem to forget.
- Upon completion of every activity the students actively participated in a summary of the day's events. Pointing out the positives and the need for improvement areas. The students were then asked to write a self-reflection on what was learned and gained by the activity.
- Student responsibility was developed through attending meetings, researching community needs, active participation and follow-up.
- The project allowed us to partner with a local assisted living facility. The facility was picked based on its location and the enthusiasm for the project by the resident home's director of recreation activities.
- After assessing the student research results in regard to a community need, the planning began by contacting local agencies to assess their willingness to participate in this program.
- Students researched many community needs to decide what need they felt should be addressed.