

## Coventry students take up challenge of Conimicut cleanup

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**PERFECT BEACH DAY:** Students from the Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School in Coventry spent Tuesday collecting more than 400 pounds of trash from Conimicut Point beach.

Fifty-five students from the Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School of Coventry got to spend their school day at the beach instead of in class on Tuesday. Instead of beach blankets and sunblock, the seventh graders from the Scorpius team utilized heavy-duty trash bags and rubber gloves during their field trip to Conimicut Point Beach.

The students were asked by their advisor, Justin Howman to think of a project that “combined learning and service that does not benefit them,” explained Cara Banspach, a math teacher. In response to this challenge, the students set a goal to pick up 450 pounds of trash from the beach between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Two hours into their challenge the students had already cleaned up 362 pounds of trash and were well on their way to the goal.

The project was “completely created by the kids,” said Howman. They devised the plan, got permission from the superintendent, designed permission slips for the trip, and booked the bus. They each paid \$8 for the transportation. Banspach, who hails from Warwick suggested Conimicut Point to her students because of its dire need for a cleanup.

The students worked with Warwick to contribute to the city’s Earth Day efforts and also teamed up with Save the Bay, to whom they will report the tallies of their trash collection. An additional amount was added to the cost of each child’s field trip fee, which totaled \$160 and will be donated to Save the Bay.

The students eagerly gathered trash ranging from paper cups and wrappers to discarded pieces of metal and brick. As the mound of jam-packed garbage bags grew, so did the determination to surpass the 450-pound goal. The success of this project is encouraging to Howman who hopes the students will be “personally disgusted by it (the trash) and will think twice about littering from this point on.”

A city crew disposed of the trash collected by the students.