

# Congregational Church Youth Group Makes A Difference

BY LORI BURGESS

MANHASSET@ANTONMEDIAGROUP.COM

The onset of summer presents an array of activities for today's teens to explore. Some youth ship off for weeks of summer camp, while others perfect their athletic skills at competitive sports camps. Some students experience new countries and cultures, while some stay close to home to work on their summer reading assignments. There are some students who devote a part of their summer vacation to helping those in need. The youth group of The Congregational Church of Manhasset partnered with The Community Reformed Church and Christ Episcopal Church to serve in some of the most neglected neighborhoods in Birmingham, AL, hoping to make a difference.

Forty-two teenagers from Manhasset, Port Washington and beyond dedicated a week of their summer to work with at-risk and vulnerable homeowners in Birmingham's downtown area. Serving through Passport Camps, Inc., Manhasset students joined three other youth groups from Washington, DC, Raleigh, NC and San Antonio, TX to repair substandard homes in Birmingham. Throughout the week, nine homes were scraped, repaired and repainted, allowing them to reveal once again their beauty and character.

When asked to recall a highlight of the week in Birmingham, Manhasset student Lily D'Ariano replied, "My favorite part of the week was working on our homeowners' house. The conditions were extremely trying but it was amazing to see everyone collaborate to complete such a beautiful task."

While in Birmingham, students also spent an evening at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute learning about the South's civil rights struggle, segregation and the brave women and men who continue to fight for equality and



justice in our world today. The youth also visited the historic 16th Street Baptist Church, where four young girls died in a tragic bombing in 1963 that made world headlines during the fight for civil rights. The students returned to Manhasset with new insight into their lives and challenged to help overcome the struggles that many people continue to face even today.

For more information about the Congregational Church youth group (grades 6 through 12), including overnight retreats, trips to ski slopes and more, contact Reverend Lori Burgess, associate minister, at 516-627-4911 or visit [www.uccmanhasset.org](http://www.uccmanhasset.org). The Congregational Church (UCC) is located at 1845 Northern Blvd., directly across from the Apple Store.

