



Mercy eighth-graders Sarah Matese and Megan Murray pick up broken glass along Blossom Road, across from the high school April 22.



Heidi Schubmehl, left, and Tessa Murante, seventh-graders, clean the campus of Mercy High School on Earth Day. The school's observance involved 120 seventh- and eighth-graders.



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Our Lady of Mercy High School classmates who acknowledged Earth Day on April 22 by performing a service project.

For the event, students picked up garbage around school grounds and the Sisters of Mercy motherhouse (to which the school is attached). In addition, some students went to nearby private residences and spruced up those yards as well.

"We do it in the yards of older people who can't do it themselves," Megan explained.

Megan stressed, however, that environmental concerns need to be addressed more than one day out of the year. She said she routinely picks trash off the ground in her neighborhood — and has even enlisted the help of small children for whom she babysits.

"When you tell them this will help their children and grandchildren, they get really excited and say, 'Can we pick up more?'" Megan remarked.

Mary Logan has developed a similar practice, saying that when she walks home from



the bus stop or store, she picks up all the trash she can find.

"What if everyone did that? What would happen to the garbage problem?" remarked Mary, 15, from Rochester's Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward.

Mary added that she was initially ridiculed for sticking trash in her pockets.

"But now I've actually got quite a few of my friends to start doing it, too," she said.

Hollie Hill said she got so tired of "looking at the scenery and seeing McDonald's wrappers on the ground" that she gave a lecture on littering for her speech class at Wayland-Cohocton High School this past winter.

"I was kind of frustrated that people were so careless," said Hollie, 15, from St. Joseph's Church in Wayland.

Hollie said that a few students got uncomfortable when they realized the speech might be targeting some of their own actions.

"I think people didn't want to realize it was them. But it made them more

conscientious," Hollie remarked.

Mary agreed that raising others' awareness of environmental issues is often all it takes to spur people into action. She noted that picking up trash and recycling take very little extra time.

"It's like a habit. It becomes human nature," she said.

For instance, Hollie said that she reuses plastic kitchenware products — a habit she picked up from her mother.

"There are just a lot of little things that people don't think about. But they make a difference,"

Hollie said.

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