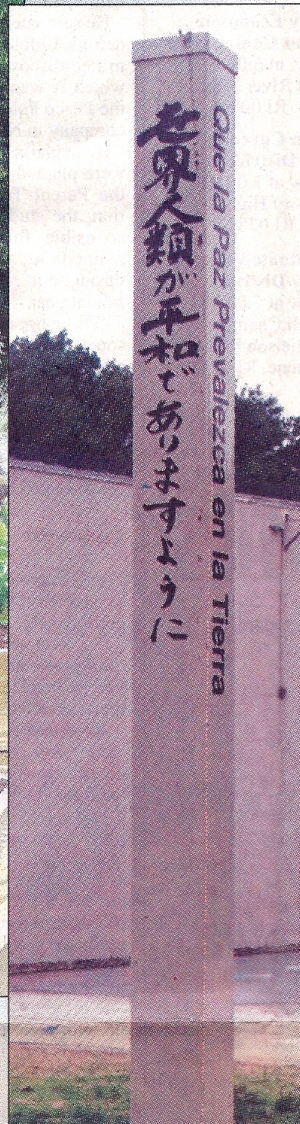


# Planting Peace



Jessica Boisclair-Daily Times

A Peace Pole with messages of peace in several languages has been erected in the Peace Garden at Tiogue Elementary School in Coventry. The brainchild of local Eagle Scout Ethan Spearman and members of the school's Playground Rebuilding Committee, the Peace Garden was dedicated June 14.



## Tiogue Elementary's Peace Garden the result of a community's efforts

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COVENTRY — Students at Tiogue Elementary School will now be able to enjoy and help maintain their new Peace Garden thanks to Ethan Spearman, who used his Eagle Scout project as a way to benefit the community and teach the students about peace.

A ceremony was held on June 14 to recognize Spearman and mark the official opening of the garden.

Ed Bove, who co-chairs the Tiogue Elementary Playground

Rebuilding Committee with his wife Kerri, said Spearman contacted them about working on his Eagle Scout Project.

Spearman, who has been with the Boy Scouts for six years, said he was searching for a project that would be beneficial to the community.

"School Committee member Nancy Sprengelmeyer had told me about it and introduced me to the Boves and the project seemed to fit very well," he said.

He said that Lowe's donated all the lumber for the project and he

was able to provide all the tools. He explained that he collaborated with the Boves to design and build the garden.

"I looked around for things that were similar to the peace garden and I talked to the Boves about what they wanted," he said. "I also consulted a friend of my dad's who is a contractor and my uncle who is an architect, and we came up with the specific details on how to put it together."

Bove said the committee had been brain-storming ideas about a

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# Garden at Tiogue for peace

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garden for some time; focusing on providing somewhere students could plant as a learning experience.

"I had mentioned various retreat centers and hospitals that had peace gardens," he said.

He explained that the garden consists of six planting beds and a centerpiece. In the center stands a Peace Pole that reads, "Make peace prevail on Earth" and "May peace be in our homes and communities." The saying is written in English, Spanish and Japanese.

He said once the Peace Garden idea blossomed the committee discovered a grant, in which it was able to receive the Peace Pole for free from a company in Nevada.

He explained that perennials were planted with the help of the Parent Teacher Association; the students will be responsible for watering and maintaining the flowers throughout the upcoming school year.

"We're hoping that maybe at some point they can be used as a learning tool," he said. "They can plant them with their



Jessica Boisclair/Daily Times

**Ethan Spearman (right) got the Peace Garden project at Tiogue Elementary School off the ground as part of his Eagle Scout Project.**

teachers; maybe plants that are indigenous to Rhode Island."

He said during the ceremony, Tiogue principal Louise Seitsinger had all the teachers and students gather around the garden to recognize Spearman for his hard work.

"I am very happy with how it turned out," said Spearman. "It turned out very well and I was very proud of what I've done and it was nice to see it all together."

Bove said the fifth-graders

then read peace quotes from Martin Luther King Jr., Thomas Kempis, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Mother Teresa and Buddha.

"It emphasized to the children that the goal is to resolve conflict through peaceful methods and not violence," he said. "We emphasized that we are one humanity and need to strive for peace around the world."

Bove said that also during the ceremony, six retirees were

recognized and given flowers. The retirees include Edna Ferrari, Deb Kolling, Sue Marron, Jeannie Roy, Amelia Drowne and Karen Maleski.

Since June 14 was Flag Day, patriotic songs such as "You're a Grand Old Flag" and "Let there be peace on Earth," were sung by Lisa Lachance.

At the end of the ceremony the children released butterflies that they had been raising in the classroom.

"Personally I really think the saying, 'If we're to start working towards peace, we need to start with the children' sums it up," Bove said. "It's been a great opportunity to talk about peaceful ways to resolve conflict and it's been a great emphasis with the teachers and a great opportunity to celebrate peace."

Bove said the playground committee is currently planning the installation of an outdoor amphitheatre classroom in the playground. He said this will give the students an opportunity to be outside and learn, but added that the committee still needs donations and funds for this project.