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FEATURED

## Calmed Kids, Secured Buildings Laud School Agents For Work at Terror Scene

By CRYSTALLEWIS 18 hrs ago



GETTINGTHEIRDUE: School Safety Agents were recognized for their actions protecting students and staff after an Oct. 31 terror attack in lower Manhattan. 'We don't have a gun or even a bulletproof vest, but we come to work every day to protect our children,' said one School Safety Agent, Barbara Taylor, at the Nov. 30 ceremony held at Stuyvesant High School.

The Chief-Leader/Rebecca White



GREGORY  
FLOYD: SSAs  
conveyed  
'authority  
compassion.'

"People think you just sit at a desk all day, so for you to acknowledge us is really special," School Safety Agent Barbara Taylor said at a Nov. 30 ceremony honoring two dozen members of the NYPD's School Safety Division for protecting students and staff at schools near a terrorist attack that killed eight people in lower Manhattan.

Sayfullo Saipov, a 29-year-old immigrant from Uzbekistan, allegedly rammed a rented truck into people on a bike path, also injuring 12. The attack took place right outside of Stuyvesant High School, where Ms. Taylor worked.

### **Locked Doors**

Although they didn't know exactly what was going on, the "first thing" that came to mind was to lock the school's doors, said fellow agent Nicole Marcano-Whittle.

NYPD Chief Brian Conroy, Commanding Officer of the School Safety Division, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and Teamsters Local 237 President Greg Floyd were among the officials who presented certificates to the agents for their bravery.

"This was a horrific tragedy a short distance from the doors of our public schools," Mr. Conroy said at the event that took place in Stuyvesant's auditorium. "Training allowed our agents to protect students and staff. But I give a lot of credit to the care agents give to our students, and to the pride you have for the job you do every day. On behalf of the Mayor and Police Commissioner [James P.] O'Neill, we thank you for the work you did that day."

"We don't have a gun or even a bulletproof vest, but we come to work every day to protect our children," Ms. Taylor said.

### **Got Kids Back Inside**

Ms. Marcano-Whittle said the agents found out there had been an attack steps from the school from a substitute teacher. They used radios to inform the School Safety Division, which then called the police, Mr. Floyd said.

The truck collided with a school bus at West and Chambers streets just after Stuyvesant had its first dismissal. To cross the West St. highway, students use a bridge.

"We know who all of our kids are, so we went to the bridge and directed them to

come back into the building,” Ms. Marcano-Whittle said. “We assured them this was the safest place to be.”

The SSAs went from classroom to classroom to inform students that the suspect had been caught and to make them feel comfortable, she said.



For the Safety Agents at the elementary schools, keeping things normal was important so the children wouldn't panic, said Antoinette Dyall and Jalissa Sheppard, SSAs at the Battery Park City School.

### **A Soothing Presence**

Mr. Floyd believed that the agents' presence represented not only the “authority” of law enforcement, “but the compassion of a parent.”

The Principal of Stuyvesant High School, Eric Contreras, thanked the agents, adding that they “make sure our students are not only safe, but well” every day.

The ceremony also included Kelly Johnson, a 33-year School Safety veteran who brought her team to help out at Stuyvesant from the Safety Division's Bronx task force, being presented with a special certificate.

Agents from the task force lined up for blocks to escort students safely to the subway. They stayed in the area until late at night to make sure it would be safe for students to come to class the next day.

“We came down—we flew down—here. That day, you guys were amazing. You had a smile on your face, even up until midnight. I'm so proud of you,” Ms.

Johnson told her comrades.

