



Nicole Ross

Student, Class of 2005

**Interviewed by Zach Feinstein and Ethan Kobak
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Nicole Ross was born in Norwalk, Connecticut. On 9/11 she was a freshman at Staples High School and her older brother was a senior. She graduated from Staples in 2005 and went to Ithaca College, graduating with a Bachelor of Science. She began teaching health in the physical education department at Staples High School in 2009.

What class were you in when you heard the news? How did you learn about this?

I was in Ms. West's biology class sitting at a lab table when they made the announcement. I remember sitting thinking, "What just happened?" In her class I was not able to sit still; it was like waiting to get a huge test back. My classmates and I all wanted to know what had gone on. The confusion and suspense was making the rest of Ms. West's class unbearable. We were asking ourselves, "Did anyone die? Was anyone at Staples impacted?" These were the questions that made it difficult not be getting information regarding the situation.

What was the school day like?

Kids were getting pulled out of school because some of their parents worked in New York City and were unsure of their well-being. There was this sort of whisper in the air about what had happened. Everyone had their own speculations. We were not getting updated and we thought this could have been accidental or maybe not. We were all very nervous and thought that we may be next. I mean, if this could happen, anything could.

Did you have a cell phone?

No.

Did you understand the severity of the situation when they first happened?

Not at all when they first made the announcement, it was confusing. I was like, "Okay. We just got word that a plane had just hit the Towers!" No one knew was if it was an accident or not. I kind of just assumed it was a smaller plane and wasn't not that severe. It wasn't until later on after the second announcement that we realized the severity. They did not give us any access to any TVs or anything, so we were kind of hidden from the information. The very next day at school it was very quiet and a lot of questions were answered. We learned no immediate family was impacted which was a huge relief. Also we all looked to each for help. The day after was the most difficult, we

did go to school and I thought that was the best place to be because of all the other students had similar thoughts.

Before 9/11, what had you learned about terrorism in school?

I don't remember it being talking about a lot before it happened. I remember even after it was, it still was very confusing - what terrorism was and how it impacts our country. It was still new to me about all the things that were going on.

How did 9/11 affect that school year?

It brought our school together as a community. Unfortunately, it sometimes takes a negative event to make this happen. It was kind of this strange feeling in our school after 9/11. Since high schoolers have very short memories, this lasted only about a month or two after. But it made us feel like a family and that we all had something in common. We also had many memorials to remember all the lives lost, and the outgoing seniors did a very nice tribute to them.

How do you think kids in your grade were affected?

Everyone was very shaken up that something like this can happen. Living in Westport, many kids' parents worked in New York City, so they were a little unsure of everything. In the moment there was a lot of confusion about just how bad the attacks were. Also since we were not getting much information, everyone who had a parent working in the city was in doubt about how they were doing.