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## Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative youth members help make abandoned lot shine

Posted by Patrick Rosso

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(Patrick D. Rosso/Bosotn.com/2012)

Luis Ramon, 20; Anthony Goncalves, 16; and Onyinyechi Onwuka, 16; clearing out weeds from the empty lot Saturday.

By Patrick D. Rosso, Town Correspondent

Youth members of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative were out in the sweltering sun Saturday to show a little love to a long-abandoned lot on Dudley Avenue.

Nearly 40 members of the Initiative's youth crew swarmed the lot adjacent to the Ideal Sub Shop, picking up refuse and cutting down weeds that reached well over many of the members' heads.

"The community is dirty, and we have to help clean it," said Emmanuel Miranda, 16, of Roxbury. "We can't have it look like this. Everyone needs to come together to do some work."

Armed with rakes, trash bags, and work gloves, members made a significant dent in the lot's look, removing bag after bag of refuse and weeds.

"I got involved with DSNI because it sounded interesting," said Nancy Baiza, 17, of Roxbury, who has been with the group for four years. "I figured if I could help out my community, that's great. I live here, and I don't want it to look bad."

The Initiative's youth crew is made up of students from Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan, who range in age from 15 to 18. Although some are volunteers, many are part of the Initiative's paid summer internship program.

"We're trying to give this lot a second chance," said Maggie Austen, the summer youth program coordinator for DSNI. "When a lot looks bad, people don't care so they will add to it. If we can maintain this lot, it will stay clean."

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Email Patrick D. Rosso, [patrick.d.rosso@gmail.com](mailto:patrick.d.rosso@gmail.com). Follow him @PDRosso, or friend him on Facebook.

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