

## News Release

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### **Tenaflly Teen Kick Starts Local Effort to Find Vaccines for Local Seniors and School Staff**

Tenaflly High School Freshman Finds Purpose in Helping Those Who Need It

#### **For Immediate Release**

**Tenaflly, NJ** – March 15, 2021 – When Tenaflly High School (THS) freshman Gabrielle “Gabi” Eimbinder learned that her friend’s grandmother was having a hard time scheduling a COVID vaccination, she sprang into action. A member of the soccer team and a variety of high school clubs, Gabi joined a new kind of team: Facebook Group New Jersey Covid Vaccine Information. One of many new Facebook groups that have cropped up over the past few months, Gabi connected with members and soon learned how to find the cherished appointment openings. Within the day, she had an appointment scheduled. Soon the Tenaflly teen was helping others, many of whom she had never met.

The New Jersey Covid Vaccine Information group is more than three thousand members strong and growing every day. Some members share tips, tricks, and experiences on getting the vaccine, while others like Gabi focus on helping those in need.

“I saw so many people who could not get an appointment, so I posted on the Facebook page, offering my help. Within a day, more than 20 people had reached to me,” said Eimbinder.

Gabi has joined and follows other scheduling groups across social media platforms, connecting with other volunteers to help everyone who needs a vaccine get vaccinated and receiving texts and alerts on her phone at all hours of the day and well into the night. Groups such as WGirls INC and the New Jersey Covid Vaccine Information group are continually looking for volunteers and helping to get vaccinations (see northjersey.com article <https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/2021/03/05/nj-covid-vaccine-appointments-volunteer-groups-help/6903139002/>).

“When I joined the first Facebook group,” added Gabi, “we had about ten thousand members. Now, there are more than 130 thousand and it is growing every day.”

An avid volunteer who spends Sunday afternoons working with autistic children at the local JCC, Gabi wanted to help her local community as well. Reaching out to Mayor Mark Zinna and the Tenaflly Senior Center, Gabi was soon getting appointments for her community. And, when the rules changed, opening appointments to educators, Gabi once again took the proactive approach reaching out to her school.

And now, this dynamo is part of dynamic scheduling team. Joined by her sister Lexi, a THS senior; friend Lila Wellisch, a THS freshman; junior Steve Ackerman and parent/resident Betty Ackerman, the team has learned the ins and outs of getting appointments quickly at nearby sites such as the Bergen County

COVID-19 Vaccination Mega-site. To date, they have been responsible for scheduling vaccinations for nearly 200 individuals, 100 of them being local educators. Their efforts have spread by word of mouth and the team continues to find appointments, often searching for ten or more appointments a day.

"After seeing my mom working hard to get appointments, I wanted to help her," said Steve Ackerman. "I think what we're doing is important because the process to get appointments is very complicated and difficult for a lot of people. They're not able to do it themselves. Together, we have helped hundreds of people get appointments and we continue to help others every day."

"The teachers are so appreciative because it makes a real difference in their lives," said Gabi. "We reached out directly to any teachers that we knew, but word spread and other teachers began to contact us."

Now three weeks in, the process is in place and the team is more motivated than ever.

"It's easy because we don't need any private information," said Gabi. "Right now, we find a lot of appointments at the Mega-site because we know how it works. As we schedule more appointments at other sites, we'll get better at those, too."

How long will Gabi continue to make appointments?

"I'm 14 and not the typical person doing the scheduling, but hearing what people say inspires me to do more," said Gabi. "I won't be done until my help is no longer needed."

One scheduling experience, however, stands out to Gabi.

"Two people who were both high risk reached out to ask if I could help to get them an appointment. I was able to get them both scheduled, which felt great, but what they said to me really inspired me to keep helping others."

*'Well we just got back... We can't thank you enough for this. My wife actually cried when we got to the car. She and I are eternally grateful to you. I will make a pledge to you that I will do a REALLY good thing for another person and pass on to another what you did for me.'*

For more information on Tenafly High School, visit [www.tenaflyschools.org](http://www.tenaflyschools.org).

For more information on the New Jersey Covid Vaccine Information group, visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/217227230061685/>.

For more information on the WGirls, visit <https://wgirls.org/requestforhelp/>.

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