

## High School Musical Actress and United Nations Youth Champion, Monique Coleman, Visits Howitt Middle School

On Thursday, November 18, 2010, students at Howitt Middle School were greeted by Monique Coleman, the actress who is most recognized for her role as Taylor in the Disney *High School Musical* series. The auditorium was buzzing with excitement as Ms. Coleman addressed issues that concern middle school students such as bullying, self-esteem, and youth empowerment. Having just been named the United Nations' Youth Champion, Ms. Coleman emphasized the importance of student involvement in their school and community. The program highlighted ways that children and teens can make positive impacts on their environment and the world we live in.

Ms. Coleman's visit came as the result of Howitt's "ROCKtober Food Fest" food drive which was organized by Mrs. Castellane and Ms. Walsh's 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and generated close to 4,000 healthy food items to be donated to local Long Island food pantries. Students' involvement with the charitable organization, Rock CAN Roll, and their dedication to helping those in their community, sparked Ms. Coleman's interest in visiting Howitt. Students were already proud of Howitt's overwhelming generosity during the food drive, but having Monique Coleman congratulate them in person just proved that "we're all in this together."

