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## First Lady Mary Pat Christie Announces Candidates for May New Jersey Heroes Online Poll

Monday, May 4, 2015 • Tags: [First Lady](#)

### *Operation Chillout, Operation Jersey Cares and GI Tickets Foundation Leaders Nominated for Improving Lives of Military Members and their Families*

**Trenton, NJ** – To mark Military Appreciation Month, First Lady Mary Pat Christie and the New Jersey Heroes Foundation have designated three deserving individuals as nominees for the May online New Jersey Hero poll. The three candidates – Ray Chimileski of Long Valley, Morris County; Tom Cunningham of Raritan, Somerset County and Jack McDonald of New Providence, Union County – are being recognized for their efforts to make a difference in the lives of military members and their families throughout the Garden State.

Beginning today, May 4th through May 26th, the public will have an opportunity to choose the May New Jersey Hero by visiting <http://newjerseyheroes.org/index/poll/> to cast their selection.

“It is so important that we never forget the commitment and courageous sacrifice of our military service members, veterans and their families,” said Mrs. Christie. “Through the good work of these three men –Ray Chimileski, Tom Cunningham and Jack McDonald – homeless veterans, our troops overseas, those wounded in combat as well as members who have returned to the homefront are getting much-needed assistance from these organizations. All three candidates are worthy of the title New Jersey Hero.”

Voters can cast their ballots once per day until the poll ends at 10:00 am on May 26th. The May New Jersey Hero will be announced later that afternoon via press release.

The May New Jersey Heroes nominees are:

### Ray Chimileski – Operation Chillout

Website: <http://operationchillout.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/OPERATION-CHILLOUT/214961841904893>

Operation Chillout is an all-volunteer outreach for homeless veterans, men and women, founded fifteen years ago by Ray Chimileski and two of his friends to help Vietnam veterans living under a railroad trestle in Dover, NJ. Since then, OCO has served thousands of homeless men and women throughout New Jersey. In the winter, OCO collects and distributes new warm clothing and survival gear in backpacks to chronic homeless veterans living on the streets. In the summer, OCO collects and distributes safe, bottled water and summer clothing to homeless veterans and impoverished communities throughout NJ and parts of PA. Our Rapid Response Team's mission is to Respond, Reach Out, Rescue and Reintegrate homeless

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veterans to self-sufficient lives - arranging emergency care and acting as their advocates for decent housing, medical attention and PTSD services. OCO believes in the inherent worth of every homeless man and woman and provides rapid response, emergency supplies and survival gear to the most vulnerable members of our communities wherever we find or learn of them

free of charge no borders - no boundaries. "If all the homeless people Operation Chillout has served could come together and hold hands - the line would stretch seven miles long."

### Tom Cunningham – Operation Jersey Cares



Website: <http://operationjerseycares.org/>  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OperationJerseyCares>

Tom Cunningham is the President of Operation Jersey Cares, a 100% volunteer organization whose mission is to help our troops overseas, as well as the returning Soldiers and Marines who have been wounded in combat. OJC is comprised of veterans and other proud Americans who are all dedicated volunteers. They give freely of their time and talents to insure that our troops are getting the support they need for the sacrifices they are making. To date, OJC has shipped more than 450,000 pounds of care packages to our troops overseas. In addition, OJC provides services to Veterans nursing homes, supports severely wounded warriors and their families in rehab at various Veterans Administration hospitals throughout the country, and assists military families in need. Founded in 2007 by a core group of volunteers who served in Vietnam and volunteers with family members serving in the military, they have been inspired by the motto of Operation Jersey Cares, "Never again shall one generation forget another."

### Jack McDonald – GI Tickets Foundation



Website: <http://www.giticketsfoundation.org/>  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-GI-Tickets-Foundation/188303667902322>

GI Tickets Foundation is a New Jersey non-profit organization that was established by Jack McDonald as he entered his junior year of high school. Currently, the team is run by Villanova and UPenn students whose mission is to send active duty soldiers and their families to major sporting events/concerts as a 'thank you' for their service. GI Tickets works diligently with monetary donors, season ticket holders, professional teams, and Fortune 500 companies to utilize unused tickets and tailor custom outings for soldiers. We distinguish ourselves by providing premium seats and creating personal experiences with our donors and those we serve. In addition, we believe that

interjecting the 'human element' in these relationships has been vital to our success. As of April 2015, our team has generated nearly \$50,000 in donations and has worked with nearly a dozen professional teams across the country. With your support, we have an incredible opportunity to benefit the soldiers in our backyard while also giving young students the ability to apply their classroom knowledge to help others.

Photo1 - Ray Chimileski of Operation  
Chillout  
Photo2 - Tom Cunningham of Operation Jersey  
Cares  
Photo3 - Jack McDonald (center) of GI Tickets  
Foundation

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