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## Inquirer: Urban Promise leader becomes a 'New Jersey Hero'

Friday, March 14, 2014

Tags: [First Lady](#)

### *In Case You Missed It*

Julia Terruso  
March 13, 2014  
Philadelphia Inquirer

After Mary Pat Christie presented the award, once cameras stopped flashing and the crowd dispersed, Jodina Hicks - the latest "New Jersey Hero" - finally got to see the person who she says saved her life. Carter, age 4, ran up to his mother with flowers and a wide smile.

"He was a big part of giving me something to really get up for," Hicks said Wednesday. My job "absolutely was, too, but on a very personal level, he was really what I needed, and me for him, too."

Hicks, executive director of Urban Promise, an award-winning youth services powerhouse in Camden with two private schools, after-school programs, and leadership, job-training, scholarship, and mentoring initiatives, became the 26th recipient of the New Jersey Heroes award and the first from Camden County.

"It's exponential, the people that you're helping here," Christie said on a tour of the facility Wednesday. New Jersey Heroes is an initiative the governor's wife started that showcases positive ways people and organizations affect their communities.

At 43, Hicks has spent more than half of her life trying to make things better for the underdog - from Camden's youth to the formerly incarcerated. In the last four years, she's done it while quietly rebuilding her own life following a personal tragedy.

But in her 10 years away from Camden, Hicks said, she never encountered the familial community or dedication to a mission she'd had at Urban Promise.

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Full article [HERE](#).

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Photo1 -

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