

First Lady Mary Pat Christie Delivers 500 Book Donation to The Children's Institute in Verona to Promote National Summer Reading Initiative

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Association for Schools and Agencies for the Handicapped (ASAH) Honors First Lady with Humanitarian of the Year Award



Trenton, NJ – Advocating the importance of reading, First Lady Mary Pat Christie today presented the students of The Children's Institute in Verona with a 500-book donation as part of the 6th Annual Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge, a free program designed to motivate students to read during their summer break. Mrs. Christie, along with 47 other Governors' spouses, plus the Governors of Illinois, Vermont, and Arizona, are serving as "Reading Ambassadors" to help reinforce the significance summer reading plays in the learning process.

During her visit, Mrs. Christie toured The Children's Institute to learn more about their programs and services for children on the autism spectrum and with

related disabilities. Afterwards, Mrs. Christie was honored with the Humanitarian of the Year Award from the Association for Schools and Agencies for the Handicapped (ASAH) for her support and leadership on behalf of New Jersey's citizens with special needs and their families. Autism awareness is an area embraced by Mrs. Christie to bring greater understanding of the developmental disability.

"The Children's Institute provides a wonderful environment that supports and encourages students to develop their own unique set of talents while promoting the independence required to lead a productive and fulfilling life," said Mrs. Christie. "Because the ability to read is such an empowering life skill, I'm also pleased to be able to donate 500 books from Scholastic for the students at TCI so that they can experience the joy of reading while gaining important learning capabilities."



"This is a very special recognition by ASAH," Mrs. Christie added. "I believe the real honorees are the parents, families and teachers who are working amidst many challenges to provide the best possible outcomes for children and young adults with autism and other developmental disabilities."

ASAH has been serving the private special education community since 1974, by providing services to over 11,000 infants, children and young adults with disabilities in New Jersey. It currently serves more than 130 school locations throughout the state.

"We are deeply honored to present this award to Mrs. Christie to recognize her strong commitment to those with disabilities in our state," stated ASAH Executive Director Gerard Theirs.

The Children's Institute (TCI) is a private non-profit school that serves children on the autism spectrum and with related disabilities, ages 3 – 21. In addition, it provides an evening adult program. TCI began as an orphanage and sheltering home in Newark in 1883, evolving into a school that has been a pioneer in special education since 1963. Since then, TCI is committed to developing the academic, social, behavioral, communication, life and career skills of children, adolescents and young adults it serves.

"It is a great privilege and a wonderful opportunity to be introduced to Mrs. Christie, who is such an important advocate for those on the autism spectrum and with related disabilities," explained Dr. Bruce Ettinger, CEO and Superintendent of The Children's Institute.

TCI is currently housed in a state-of-the-art building on 7 acres in Verona. In September 2012, TCI will be opening a second campus in Livingston, enabling it to house the expanding High School Program and to establish a Day Adult program to meet the critical needs of graduates and individuals in the community.

TCI serves children and young adults from northern New Jersey, including Essex, Union, Morris, Hudson, Middlesex, Passaic, Bergen and adjoining counties.

For more information about TCI go to www.tcischool.org

Photo Caption 1: First Lady Mary Pat Christie joins Scholastic, school, local and county officials for 500-book donation to The Children's Institute in Verona.

Photo Caption 3: First Lady Mary Pat Christie with Girl Scouts from The Children's Institute in Verona.

Photo Caption 2: First Lady Mary Pat Christie visits an audio visual class at The Children's Institute in Verona.

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