

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Presents Check for Senior Center Expansion

Gov. Christie Whitman today presented a ceremonial check for \$75,000 to Washington Township officials to help expand the Washington Township Senior Center. Expansion of the center will include a multi-purpose room and stage area for aerobics, dancing and performances.

"This center has been a resource not just for seniors - with educational, recreation, and nutrition programs - but for all the citizens of Mercer County who use this center for information and training on a host of seniors' issues," the Governor said.

"It's no secret that seniors are our fastest growing population. New Jersey's 1.4 million seniors are a vital part of what makes our state great. Longevity is redefining our concept of aging. It forces us to take a much closer look at our communities and what role older adults play in our community experience," she said.

The funds, which will be used to hire an architect to prepare bid documents for the expansion project, were included in the Fiscal Year 2000 state budget. The balance of the grant will be used for construction costs.

Governor Whitman also reemphasized her commitment to senior issues, highlighting the various state programs developed under her administration to benefit New Jersey's senior citizens.

In 1996, the Governor created the Department of Health and Senior Services to provide a single department through which seniors could get information and services. Through the department, nursing home report cards have been issued tracking facilities around the state and their licensure inspections. Also, the nursing home quality improvement project geared toward improving quality of care issues was started.

In addition, the Governor created NJEASE, a program that streamlines access for senior programs into one phone number. The number, 1-877-222-3737, connects seniors to county-based advisors who can assist them in locating services that may be of help to them.

