

# Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004  
TRENTON, NJ 08625

## NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor  
609-777-2600

RELEASE: April 21, 1999

### **NJ Gov. Christie Whitman on Colorado Tragedy**

NJ Gov. Christie Whitman said the violence that rocked Littleton, Colorado yesterday should send a strong reminder to all of us that we need to be ever vigilant in interceding with troubled youths before acts of senseless violence occur.

"My heart goes out to every parent and child in Littleton who has had to suffer through this terrible tragedy," Gov. Whitman said. "I have spoken to Colorado Gov. Bill Owens and have expressed all of our sympathies and extended to him all of the resources and support that our state has to offer during this time."

"Only time will tell just how and why these acts of senseless violence transpired, and only through the passage of time can any bit of healing occur," she said.

"Certainly, yesterday's events are a critical reminder of how important it is that we look for warning signs that something is wrong with our children and to take swift action when those warning signs first appear," Gov. Whitman said.

"There are resources we can use, and indeed must use to protect our children," she said.

"The 'Tip Sheet' that has been prepared by our University of Medicine and Dentistry tells teachers and parents what patterns to look for and what actions should be taken with a student that exhibits potentially violent tendencies," she said.

"Our school search manual is regarded by the National School Boards Association as one of the best resources available to help school officials keep guns and dangerous weapons out of schools," she said.

"The very best thing we can do to prevent these types of situations is to have open lines of communication with our children. Parents need to have an active role in their children's lives. Children should be supervised when they are on the Internet, and children should know that they can turn to their parents, teachers or others when they see, hear or notice behavior that concerns them," she said.

"Parents need to back up teachers who raise issues of concern to them. The best thing that we, as parents, can do is to listen to our teachers and not dismiss or ignore their concerns," the Governor said.

"In addition, my administration is drafting legislation to expand the jurisdiction of the crisis intervention units in county family courts to include children who are identified as being at risk for behaving violently," she said.

"We must provide all the support we can for families that are dealing with troubled children," she said.

