

First Lady Mary Pat Christie Launches Third Annual Spirit of a Hero Scholarship Program

Thursday, January 22, 2015 Tags: [First Lady](#)



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\$5,000 Grant Awards Recognize Community Service of Eligible New Jersey Students Pursuing Higher Education Opportunities

Trenton, NJ - From anti-bullying programs and initiatives for the homeless to redistributing instruments to students in need, New Jersey's youth are making significant contributions that are making a real difference in their local communities. Recognizing this commitment to serving others, First Lady Mary Pat Christie today announced the third annual Spirit of a Hero Scholarship for students graduating from high school.

The \$5,000 scholarships, which emanate from the Heart of a Hero program for military veterans, continues the Christie Administration's commitment to assist New Jersey students pursue post-secondary education opportunities.

"Each year, I am continually inspired by the spirit and commitment of our young people," said Mrs. Christie. "In two years, we've received more than 1,500 applications from so many deserving high school seniors who are doing good work to help improve the lives of others. With the Spirit of a Hero Scholarship program, we want to recognize and honor these good deeds while helping these students to achieve their career goals."

Last year, twenty-two students from throughout the Garden State received \$110,000 in scholarship funding from the Spirit of a Hero program.

Katie Rha, a 2014-2015 recipient who co-founded Hearts in Harmony, which collects and distributes used musical instruments to students in need, said: "My experience at UNC Chapel Hill thus far, has expanded my proprietary interest in writing to avenues in business and economics, with the UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School and UNC Economic Research Department. I am so grateful for the generosity of The Spirit of a Hero Scholarship, for it has allowed me to pursue new fields I may never have had the chance to explore."

For awardee Ashley Craig, who created the non-profit foundation S.A.B.B. - Students Against Being Bullied, "Being one of the Spirit of a Hero Scholarship recipients this past year not only meant the world to me in the moment, but has also greatly helped me pursue my degree in psychology. The funds will help me continue to chase my dreams. Simply amazing is all I have to say. I will forever be grateful."

Recipient, Jeremy Garriga, who founded a non-profit foundation called Soxcess, an initiative to provide needy individuals with brand new socks, commented: "I am most proud to have earned the NJ Spirit of a Hero Award; just knowing that this fund supports the work I do for the community and my academic achievements means a great deal to me. The scholarship award will go towards my higher education tuition, ultimately resulting in achieving my dream goals in medicine."

To be considered for the scholarship, candidates must meet several criteria, including a demonstrated commitment to volunteerism and community contribution; be a New Jersey resident and U.S. Citizen; submission of a high school transcript and a letter of recommendation from a current teacher or advisor; be in good academic standing with their secondary school and enroll as a student at an accredited college/university or a vocational training school in the 2015-2016 school year (Fall or Spring Semester).

Application forms are available online at the New Jersey Heroes website by clicking on <http://newjerseyheroes.org/index/2015-spirit-of-a-hero-scholarship-application-form/>. The application deadline is

Friday, **March 20, 2015**. Applicants must fully complete the form by no later than **5:00 p.m. on March 20, 2015** or submit an application via US Mail postmarked no later than **March 20, 2015** and mailed to NJ Heroes, P.O. Box 95, Mendham, NJ 07945-0095.

The Spirit of a Hero Scholarship is only to be used for post-secondary tuition, fees, or books. Scholarship checks are made payable to the university of the recipient.

The New Jersey Heroes Scholarship Selection Committee will review and evaluate all scholarship applications. Recipients of the scholarships will be notified in May 2015.

New Jersey Heroes is an initiative First Lady Mary Pat Christie began in 2010 to showcase the positive and unique ways people and organizations are impacting New Jersey and their communities. To nominate a hero, go to newjerseyheroes.org and follow the application instructions to submit the person you believe is a true New Jersey Hero.

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