

Search

All of NJ

Submit

[Home](#)[Newsroom](#)[Media](#)[Administration](#)[NJ's Priorities](#)[Contact Us](#)[Press Releases](#)[Public Addresses](#)[Executive Orders](#)[Press Kit](#)[Reports](#)[Home](#) > [Newsroom](#) > [Press Releases](#) > 2013

First Lady Mary Pat Christie Names Spirit of a Hero Scholarship Recipients

Thursday, May 30, 2013

Tags: [Education](#)

Trenton, NJ – First Lady Mary Pat Christie announced \$100,000 in New Jersey Heroes *Spirit of a Hero* Scholarships today during a ceremony at Drumthwacket, the Governor's official residence in Princeton. Twenty students from throughout the state will each be receiving a \$5,000 scholarship to pursue post-secondary education opportunities. Mrs. Christie launched the scholarship program earlier this year in February.

"I'm so proud that through New Jersey Heroes, we were able to provide these deserving students with an opportunity to follow their dreams and pursue their desired career paths," said Mrs. Christie. "These students have made a difference in their communities through service and volunteerism. I applaud the spirit and commitment they have demonstrated to improve the lives of others, and their personal aspirations to achieve future success."

The twenty scholarship recipients are:

Omolola Agabalogun, *Egg Harbor Township High School*, (Egg Harbor Township, Atlantic County). Lola has been volunteering with Families of Autistic Children Education & Support (FACES) for the past 4 years, helping to create a support network for families and children with autism. Her volunteer work at FACES inspired her to organize an Autism Awareness Week at her high school.

Richard Apramian, *Northern Valley Regional High School at Old Tappan*, (Old Tappan, Bergen County). In addition to his volunteer activities as an EMT, Richard has become a mentor and friend to a developmentally disabled student through the Hand in Hand club. He was named president of the club this year.

Ellen Bridget Carpinelli, *Summit Public High School*, (Summit, Union County). Ellen has volunteered for Bridges Outreach for the past 4 years, assisting in preparing and delivering meals to the homeless in Newark every Friday night. She also volunteers her time with disabled children at the Children's Specialized Hospital in Mountainside.

Jordan Chervin, *Manalapan High School*, (Manalapan, Monmouth County). Jordan has volunteered at The Manor at Centra State Hospital for more than 2 years, where she assists Alzheimer's and dementia residents with arts and crafts and spends time watching football with them.

Michelle Guo, *Bergen County Academies*, (Ho-Ho-Kus, Bergen County). Michelle is a co-founder of the "Do Something" Club at her high school, where she promotes teen leadership and community services. Through the club, Michelle has organized and led various fundraisers and projects to help those in need, including a jeans drive for homeless teenagers, writing cards for pediatric cancer patients and raising money for breast cancer awareness.

James Cooper Itkoff, *Princeton High School*, (Princeton, Mercer County). For the past 8 years, James has volunteered his time for Princeton Special Sports, mentoring and teaching children with developmental differences how to play sports.

Brandon J. Karpowich, *Toms River High School North*, (Toms River, Ocean County). Brandon founded Volunteers R' Us, a non-profit organization dedicated to connecting volunteers to organizations that are volunteer dependent. He has created a website for Volunteers R' Us that connects more than 1,000 potential volunteers with more than 20 organizations.

Anish Kumar, *Bridgewater-Raritan Regional High School*, (Martinsville, Somerset County). During his sophomore year of high school, Anish started the "Healing Notes" musical group, which recruits high school musicians to play for patients at Somerset Medical Center and Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center.

Joseph M. Mandes, *Atlantic City High School*, (Brigantine, Atlantic County). Joseph, along with his twin brother Michael, co-founded the "Kids for South Jersey Cancer Fund" to help the Fund continue services in their area. They have raised more than \$48,000 in the last five years and have recruited 18 school districts, 8 businesses and 3 honors societies to help in the effort through initiatives like dress down days and car washes. They also started their own lemonade stand together, raising more than \$34,000 to support "Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation."

Michael Mandes, *Atlantic City High School*, (Brigantine, Atlantic County). Michael, along with his twin brother Joseph, co-founded the "Kids for South Jersey Cancer Fund" to help the Fund continue services in their area. They have raised more than \$48,000 in the last five years and have recruited 18 school districts, 8 businesses and 3 honors societies to help in the effort through initiatives like dress down days and car washes. They also started their own lemonade stand together, raising more than \$34,000 to support "Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation."

Stay Connected
with Social Media

Stay Connected
with Email Alerts

**LIKE THIS PAGE? SHARE IT
WITH YOUR FRIENDS.**

[SHARE](#) [f](#) [t](#) [e](#) ...

Zaire Martin, *MetEast High School*, (Camden, Camden County). Zaire co-founded the "Child of Mine" Mentoring Group, where he serves as a role model for troubled boys by mentoring them to improve their grades, play sports and become responsible young men.

Alicia Irene Mitchko, *Hamilton High School*, (Hamilton, Mercer County). When Alicia's uncle was stationed in Iraq, she worked with family and friends in her Girl Scout troop to start the "Sweets for Soldiers" initiative for volunteers to bake cookies and decorate tins to send to deployed troops. Alicia has been administering the "Sweets for Soldiers" project for the past 6 years.

Monica Lilia Murphy, *Manasquan High School*, (Spring Lake Heights, Monmouth County). For the past 8 years, Monica has participated in the "CAN-Sculpture" Program, where she builds larger-than-life art sculptures made from recycled cans to raise donations for hunger awareness. To date, Monica's efforts have produced 20,000 pounds of food for the FoodBank of Monmouth & Ocean Counties.

Christopher Joseph Nolze, *Toms River High School South*, (Toms River, Ocean County). Chris created the non-profit foundation, "Chris's Fight for a Cure," when he diagnosed with brain cancer 5 years ago. After Superstorm Sandy struck New Jersey, Chris used the money he had been raising to help bring Christmas to families affected by the storm. Chris remains committed to raising money to help families, like his, in crisis situations.

Kelly O'Neill, *Bernards High School*, (Bernardsville, Somerset County). Following the sudden death of her uncle in 2011, Kelly started a teen chapter of "Heartworks," a non-profit organization that provides random acts of kindness for community members in need. Kelly's "Junior Heartworks" chapter provides assistance to several families a month through food and gift certificate donations.

Lynese Rawlins, *Red Bank Regional*, (Red Bank, Monmouth County). During her sophomore year, Lynese started a GlamourGals chapter in her school, organizing a group of female teenagers that visits senior citizen centers to provide makeovers and manicures for female residents. Today, Lynese's chapter has 45 girls that visit residences at the Chelsea Assisted Living center twice a month.

Christopher Rim, *Academies at Englewood*, (Paramus, Bergen County). Christopher is the founder and president of "It Ends Today," an anti-bullying organization that has more than 20 chapters and has visited more than 65,000 students. Christopher was asked to participate in the launch of Lady Gaga's "Born This Way Foundation," and his goal is to make "It Ends Today" the world's largest anti-bullying organization.

Melissa Romanovich, *Tenafly High School*, (Tenafly, Bergen County). In 2009, Melissa started the "Musical Notes" organization to share her love of music with economically disadvantaged children. Through her organization, Melissa created a curriculum that she and 15 other volunteers teach to various school districts in the state.

Nayna Shah, *Morristown High School*, (Morris Plains, Morris County). Nayna serves as a lead mentor for the "Pathways for Exception Children" organization, traveling to various elementary, middle and high schools across New Jersey to promote acceptance, inclusion and diversity among students.

Christopher Stone, *Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School*, (Fanwood, Union County). After a child from a local family in his community was diagnosed with cancer, Chris became involved in his high school's "Student Movement Against Cancer" (SMAC) club, where he has helped raise nearly \$200,000 to fight cancer.

New Jersey Heroes worked with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) and the Department of Education to promote the scholarship through college fairs as well as through high school guidance offices/counselors. More than 700 students applied for the Spirit of a Hero Scholarship.

To be considered for the scholarship, candidates fulfilled several criteria, including a demonstrated commitment to volunteerism and community contribution; New Jersey residency; U.S. citizenship; submission of a high school transcript with a letter of recommendation from a current teacher or advisor; have good academic standing with their secondary school and enroll as a student at an accredited college/university or a vocational training school in the 2013-2014 school year (Fall or Spring Semester).

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

PHOTO CAPTION: First Lady Mary Pat Christie honors twenty students from throughout the state with a \$5,000 New Jersey Heroes *Spirit of a Hero* Scholarship at Drumthwacket in Princeton, New Jersey.

###

Press Contact:
Michael Drewniak
Colin Reed
609-777-2600

Statewide: [NJ Home](#) | [Services A to Z](#) | [Departments/Agencies](#) | [FAQs](#)
Office of the Governor: [Home](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [Media](#) | [Administration](#) | [NJ's Priorities](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2017
Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000