

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Hails Efforts of Gilda's Club

Governor Christie Whitman today congratulated representatives of Gilda's Club Inc. for their efforts to support cancer patients and their families as they cope with the emotional issues surrounding the disease. Over 150 representatives of the organization gathered at the Hasbrouck Heights Hilton to discuss the program and attend sessions on fundraising, grief support and volunteer management.

"I'd like to congratulate you on fulfilling the mission of your namesake Gilda Radner, who, while facing her own struggle with cancer, called for centers where others could receive emotional support in their time of need," said the Governor. "In fulfilling that dream your organization offers an important complement to medical care, providing a place where people can share their experiences with others living with cancer and learn more about the disease.

"In supporting this worthy cause you've all demonstrated the kind of community spirit that makes New Jersey such a wonderful place to live and raise a family," said Gov. Whitman. "Just as Gilda Radner's concern for others lives on through this organization, your support will touch the lives of an untold number of people."

Gilda's Club, Inc. is a non-profit, free-of-charge organization offering support and information to people with cancer and their families. The organization, named for Saturday Night Live comedian Gilda Radner, is holding a three-day international affiliate convention, hosted by the Northern New Jersey affiliate which is scheduled to open in November of this year. Radner died from ovarian cancer in 1989.

The flagship facility for the organization is in New York City and boasts more than 1,300 members. Affiliates are currently located in South Florida, Detroit, Chicago, Nashville, Ohio and Iowa. More than twelve affiliates are in development throughout the United States, Canada and Great Britain. The Northern New Jersey affiliate expects to serve between 500 and 750 people plus their families and friends, in its first year.

Governor Whitman recently declared October "Breast Cancer Awareness Month" and dedicated \$2.7 million of the FY 2000 budget to address the need for early cancer detection. New Jersey also raises funds for cancer research through the "Conquer Cancer"

license plates and the Breast Cancer Research Fund tax checkoff box. Created in 1996, the NJ Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Initiative works to educate women about the need for early detection. More than 14,000 eligible women have received free mammograms since 1996 as a result of the Initiative.

