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First Lady Mary Pat Christie Presents 4th Annual Heart of a Hero Scholarships to Ten Deserving Servicemen and Women

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Trenton, NJ – Providing military service members with another resource to pursue their desired career paths, First Lady Mary Pat Christie today announced the recipients of the fourth annual New Jersey Heroes *Heart of a Hero* Scholarship. Each of the ten recipients will receive a \$5,000 scholarship award to help advance post-secondary education or vocational training. Mrs. Christie established the program as additional means to help New Jersey's military men and women make their higher education and career goals a reality. AT&T is working with the New Jersey Heroes Foundation to sponsor five of the scholarships.

"I am so proud that New Jersey Heroes is able to have this opportunity to play a part in the career preparation of these most deserving New Jerseyans," said First Lady Mary Pat Christie. "This year's *Heart of a Hero* Scholarship recipients represent a diversity of

professional aspirations – from urban and special education to finance and business as well as pharmacology and neuropsychology. With this group, New Jersey Heroes has now been able to assist 40 of our dedicated military men and women advance their career objectives. The Governor and I offer our heartfelt congratulations and thank these heroes for their service to our state and country."

AT&T provided \$25,000 to the New Jersey Heroes Foundation to sponsor five of the scholarships, according to J. Michael Schweder, president of AT&T Mid Atlantic.

"Our nation's servicemen and women make tremendous sacrifices in service to our country and to the State of New Jersey. At AT&T, we want to do what we can to honor and support them at home and abroad," Schweder said. "The *Heart of a Hero* Scholarships will enable these extraordinary New Jerseyans to achieve their career goals while they also continue serving others in their communities. We join Mrs. Christie in thanking – and congratulating – the scholarship recipients."

The ten 2015 New Jersey *Heart of a Hero* Scholarship recipients are:

1st Lt. Debra Cho, U.S. Army (Fort Lee, Bergen County): Debra's experience as a Biology Teacher with the Teach for America program at Newark Prep Charter School has inspired her to become a leader in urban education and to help students achieve educational equality. Currently, she is working towards her Masters in Biology in Science Education from Montclair State University.

Private 1st Class Daniel Cullen, Army National Guard (Phillipsburg, Warren County): Dan has volunteered his time as a Sunday School Coordinator every Sunday for the past 3 years, in addition to being a mentor to at-risk youth through the Volt Student Center Program. His experience as a Principal and serving children within

the special needs community has led him to pursue an educational doctorate in Special Education Leadership from the Caldwell University of New Jersey.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Gregory Delahanty, U.S. Navy (Lakewood, Ocean County): After serving in the Navy, Greg co-founded the Warrior Wellness Center, which provides CrossFit training to fellow veterans and their families free of charge, with the aim of alleviating PTSD. Greg has also spent over 100 hours taking part in Veteran Care Package Drives with the American Recreational Military Services non-profit foundation. Currently, he is studying Marketing at Kean University.

Specialist Nambaramey Dy, U.S. Army Reserve (Camden, Camden County): Nam volunteers his time with Student Veterans Group, developing programs and visiting senior citizen veterans at The Voorhees Care & Rehab Center. His involvement in the Rutgers Student Government Association also allows him to help navigate many barriers and issues for his fellow student veterans. Nam is pursuing his business degree at Rutgers University Camden.

Sergeant First Class & Platoon Sergeant Charles Elison, U.S. Army (Wenonah, Gloucester County): After serving as a Sergeant First Class in the US Army, Charles started serving as a Platoon Sergeant in the 1-114th Infantry Battalion out of Woodbury, New Jersey. He has been very involved in Team Rubicon and Habitat for Humanity, participating in the construction of 12 homes since December 2014. He has also been a Service Officer for the Veterans of Foreign Wars since 2006. Charles hopes to attend graduate school after earning his Bachelor's Degree in Economics from Temple University.

Staff Sergeant Alvin Jay Jones, U.S. Airforce (Fort Dix, Burlington County): Alvin continuously volunteers within the veteran community, most recently bringing the "We Honor Veterans" program to the McGuire Airforce Base. Through this program, military members interact with veterans who are in hospice facilities. Alvin is currently working on completing his Bachelor's Degree in Finance from Ashford University and one day hopes to open his own business.

Sergeant Arcadio Matos, Jr, U.S. Army (Piscataway, Middlesex County): An Army veteran, Alvin serves as the Vice President of RU Serves, a veteran initiative at Rutgers, which provides fellowship, resources, support, and advocacy for student veterans and their families. He also volunteers at the Rutgers Veterans House, a center that supports military veterans at the university. After earning his degree in Information Technology and Informatics with a specialization in game design, Arcadio hopes to design a video game that will help veterans who suffer from PTSD.

Sergeant Emily Monks, U.S. Marine Corps (Chatham, Morris County): After being injured by a drunk driver, Emily, a Marine Corps veteran, became involved in the Every 15 Minutes DUI initiative, which challenges high school juniors and seniors to think about drinking, driving, and personal safety decisions through a real life simulation. Emily's interaction with her pharmacist at the hospital following her accident has inspired her to pursue a degree in Pharmacology to be able to show others the compassion she received.

Lt Commander Barbara Schultz, U.S. Navy (Andover, Sussex County): During her 11 years of active duty in the Navy, Barbara held a variety of leadership training roles, including Protocol Officer in Japan and Officer Recruiter in Pittsburgh. She has been a part of many veterans' boards and initiatives, currently serving as the Treasurer of the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps and sponsoring young college students in the NROTC program at Penn State. Barbara is earning an MBA from Centenary College.

Senior Master Sergeant Marie Sheehan, NJ Air National Guard (Franklin Lakes, Bergen County): During her time in the National Guard, Marie worked as a Facilitator in the Sexual Assault & Prevention Program, which later led to an involvement in both the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Response Teams. She currently volunteers as a Master Resilience Trainer for Comprehensive Airman Fitness, developing and facilitating training curriculum on mental, social, physical, and spiritual resilience. She is also involved with 11th Hour Rescue, a non-profit that saves animals from kill shelters and helps them find homes. Marie is working towards a degree in Neuropsychology at William Paterson University.

For last year's recipients, the *Heart of a Hero* Scholarship is helping to attain educational and career goals in a variety of ways. 2014 Heart of Hero recipient Katie Grogan an Air Force and NJ National Guard Reservist from Jackson, New Jersey said, "The monetary amount helped cover the cost of my uniforms, books and part of the tuition for my nursing program. I am so grateful to everyone involved in the committee that honors veterans through this amazing scholarship."

For Navy Petty Officer 2nd Joseph Mack Mota, from Lacey Township, the Heart of a Hero scholarship helped him reach his educational goals. Mota said, "With the support of the NJ *Heart of a Hero* Scholarship, I earned my Master's Degree in December and was able to secure employment working with student-veterans like me who aspire to receive a college education. I want to thank Mary Pat Christie and the entire NJ Heroes Foundation staff for their dedication to all our New Jersey military veterans currently or formerly serving"

To be considered for the *Heart of a Hero* Scholarship, applicants were required to meet several program criteria: 1) be a United States citizen and New Jersey resident; 2) be a high school graduate or have a high school equivalency diploma (GED); 3) served in the military; 4) submit a letter stating goals and how the scholarship will be used; 5) enroll as a student at an accredited college/university or a vocational training school in pursuit of a degree for the 2015-2016 school year; 6) demonstrate a commitment to volunteerism and community contribution, in the spirit of New Jersey Heroes.

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, visit <http://newjerseyheroes.org/index/nominate-a-hero/> and follow the application instructions to submit the person you believe is a true New Jersey Hero.

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