



First Lady Mary Pat Christie Sees Innovative Glassmaking Skills of GlassRoots Students at Work

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GlassRoots-Designed Ornament Will Represent New Jersey on National Christmas Tree in Washington

Trenton, NJ – First Lady Mary Pat Christie observed how the art of glassmaking is transforming the lives of at-risk youth in Newark by nurturing their artistic skills and empowering self sufficiency. The visit to GlassRoots Inc. is part of Mrs. Christie's ongoing work to recognize groups and organizations that encourage and inspire people to have pride in themselves and their state.

"Creative expression can be a powerful form of self discovery," said Mrs. Christie. "For these young artists, they are learning challenging new skills, self discipline and pride in the beautiful works of art they are producing. "I commend GlassRoots Inc. for developing this unique program that encourages the creative spirit through self confidence."

GlassRoots is designing New Jersey's official 2010 National Christmas Tree - State Tree Ornament, which will be featured on New Jersey's State Christmas Tree on the Ellipse in Washington DC in December.

"This is truly a special opportunity and I'm delighted that the homegrown talents of GlassRoots will be showcased on the national stage this holiday season," added Mrs. Christie.

Modeled after the Hilltop Artists-in-Residence project in Tacoma, Washington, GlassRoots has trained more than 4,000 at-risk youth at their studios in Newark since 2001. Students learn the various techniques of glassmaking while under the careful supervision of skilled instructors and must follow strict safety protocols to participate. Students include those from local public and charter schools, the Boys and Girls Clubs, the Newark Housing Authority, and the Girl Scouts.

"We are excited by the visit of New Jersey's first lady to the GlassRoots studios and it will certainly be a long-remembered experience for our students," said Wesley Simms, Executive Director of GlassRoots, Inc. "We are also honored that the work of our students will represent the State of New Jersey on the White House Christmas Tree and believe it demonstrates the tremendous potential that exists within Newark's often overlooked youth to create beautiful and significant glass art."

More information about GlassRoots can be found at www.glassroots.org.

CAPTION: First Lady Mary Pat Christie views the artistic skills of glassmaking students at GlassRoots, who are designing New Jersey's official 2010 National Christmas Tree - State Tree Ornament to be showcased in Washington, DC this December.

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