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Governor Chris Christie, First Lady and Family Highlight Community Service at America's Grow-A-Row

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Trenton, N.J. - Today, Governor Chris Christie, joined by First Lady Mary Pat Christie, their four children and over 35 members of the Governor's Office staff, visited Peaceful Valley Orchards in Pittstown to greet volunteers and participate in the community service project known as "America's Grow-a-Row."

Founded in 2002 by Pittstown resident Chip Paillex, America's Grow-a-Row is a non-profit organization that seeks to feed the hungry through the cultivation and donation of fresh produce to local food banks through a volunteer effort of planting, picking, and delivery of fresh produce.

"In these difficult economic times, more and more New Jerseyans are looking to their communities for assistance - food banks, local shelters and centers offering meals to the community are facing especially high demand," said Governor Chris Christie and First Lady Mary Pat Christie. "Fortunately, our state is well served by individuals and organizations that are committed to improving their communities and offering help to those who need it most. We are especially proud and grateful for the efforts of Chip Paillex and all of the volunteers at America's Grow-a-Row, who provide a daily example of what service and New Jersey Pride really mean."

What began as a single-volunteer operation on a small plot of land in 2002 has grown exponentially to an operation of over 950 people volunteering 5,000+ hours of their time. In 2009, America's Grow-a-Row donated 317,000 pounds of fresh, healthy produce to feed the hungry.

To date, America's Grow-a-Row has donated over 780,000 pounds, or over \$1 million worth, of produce to feed New Jersey's hungry. Many New Jersey corporations have helped or signed on to help through volunteer days, such as Johnson & Johnson, Merck, Sanofi-Aventis, and New York Life.

"It's an honor that Governor Christie, his family and staff joined us today to volunteer with America's Grow-a-Row to help feed those less fortunate," said America's Grow-a-Row President Chip Paillex. "Taking time out of his busy schedule is a testament to his genuine concern for the people of New Jersey who have been affected by these challenging times."

In January, Chip Paillex was recognized as a "New Jersey Hero" for his efforts to strengthen his community as President of America's Grow-a-Row by then Governor-elect Christie's Inaugural Committee.

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