

Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004
TRENTON, NJ 08625

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor
Steffanie Bell
609-777-2600

RELEASE: September 9, 1999

Governor Whitman Teaches State History and Discusses School Violence Prevention With Fourth Grade Class in Camden

Gov. Christie Whitman today taught New Jersey history to a fourth grade class at the LEAP Academy Charter School in Camden, keeping a promise to volunteerism that she made during her State of the State address in January. The Governor also took the opportunity to discuss school violence prevention with the students.

The Governor told students about a new program aimed at helping students prevent violence and keep it out of their schools and their communities. The V-Free initiative announced by the Governor on Tuesday creates a tip line, 1-877-624-8082, for students to call when they are concerned about a potentially dangerous situation. A website, www.njyouth.com/vfree, is also available to provide resource information for students, teachers and parents. In addition, \$75,000 will be made available to help students get involved in the effort to prevent violence.

"By doing these things, I hope that state government can help you make the most of your time in school and have a great time growing up without having to worry about violence," Gov. Whitman told students during a school assembly after teaching the fourth graders.

In 1998, Gov. Whitman challenged more New Jerseyans to volunteer to help their fellow citizens, and throughout the year Gov. Whitman spent time each month reading for Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic. The organization provides audio tapes of books for those with vision problems. She added teaching to her list of volunteer activities in her 1999 State of the State address.

"I made a promise to add to my commitment to volunteerism by teaching the New Jersey history and government curriculum in one fourth grade class every month," the Governor said. "I have to comment on how well the class treated their substitute teacher!"

"In my class, I spoke about how one of my favorite things about being governor is that it gives me a chance to make a real difference in people's lives. Teaching a class each month is one small way of making a difference," Gov. Whitman said. "But if I can set an example for others to follow, maybe they will volunteer - not only in schools, but in organizations and communities around New Jersey."

Gov. Whitman told the students that they, too, should strive to make New Jersey a better place to live, play, and go to school. "You don't have to be a governor to make a difference in people's lives. Each one of you can set an example for others

to follow. You can work hard in school. You can be kind, tolerant, and demonstrate respect for all people," she told the students.

LEAP Academy is one of New Jersey's first charter schools and focuses on math, science and technology. Approximately 500 students in grades K-8 are currently enrolled in the school.

