

Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004
TRENTON, NJ 08625

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Pete McDonough
609-777-2600
Tim Wright - Office of Volunteerism
609-984-3470
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Governor Presents Awards to Ten Volunteers

Gov. Christie Whitman today presented awards to ten volunteers or organizations, honoring them for their selfless commitment to helping other New Jerseyans at a ceremony at Drumthwacket in Princeton.

"I am a firm believer in responsibility," the Governor told the honorees. "Responsibility for the way you conduct your own life, as well as responsibility for your actions. That ultimately leads to what we have gathered here today to recognize, a responsibility for the greater good - a duty to give something back to your community."

The ten winners represented a broad range of volunteer service including preserving the environment, recruiting organ donors, educating children, assisting senior citizens and firefighting. Selected by a panel of judges to receive the award, the honorees were chosen from 400 nominations submitted in March to the Governor's Office of Volunteerism by non-profit organizations, service clubs, public officials, schools, and volunteer administrators.

Also at the ceremony, the Governor encouraged more New Jerseyans to donate whatever time they can afford to helping others, a challenge she has met in the past year. "At my second inauguration, I made a promise to dedicate a few hours every month to helping others by reading for Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic. Though my time commitment may seem small in the grand scheme of things, it is more than I have done in the past." During 1998, the Governor has volunteered two hours each month recording books for the organization. The honorees for 1998, listed by award category, are:

The Arts: **First Night Toms River**, Toms River, Ocean County, is a group of 350 volunteers who for the last four seasons have organized First Night events on New Year's Eve for the entire Toms River community. Up to 22 entertainment venues are provided, encouraging a family and arts-oriented way to ring in a new year. There is an emphasis on creating an alcohol and drug-free environment.

Benefitting Seniors: **Matthew Tatur** of Cedar Run, Ocean County, has volunteered at the Seacrest Village Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Little Egg Harbor for the past two years. The seven-year-old assists with transport, meals, and special events. He visits regularly with Seacrest's Alzheimer's residents. Matthew also raised over \$1,200 last autumn at a walk-a-thon in support of the Alzheimer's Association's Central New Jersey chapter. He is a student at McKinley Avenue School.

Benefitting Youth: **Camp Lost and Found** is a program of Trinity Hospice in Runnemede, Camden County. The camp's volunteer counselors provide a three-day sleep-away experience for children 7-14 who have lost a loved one through death. The camp fosters sharing and joint grieving in a supportive environment so the children can heal emotionally. The session for 1998, the camp's fifth season, is being held this weekend.

Education: **Ann Hoener**, a retired teacher from Rahway, Union County, has volunteered since 1993 with Operation Archeology, a multi-disciplinary program run by the county Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs for fifth graders to interpret the Deserted Village of Feltville-Glenside Park in Berkeley Heights. Ann produced a slide presentation which she presents at eight schools per semester, has written an illustrated history of the site, created a historical time line, and created a supplemental course on artifacts.

The Environment: United through their concern for an abandoned Magic Marker plant on Calhoun Street, the **Northwest Community Improvement Association** in Trenton is working to remediate and return to productive use a seven-acre brownfield in a residential neighborhood. The group educated local residents, partnered with community groups, and advocated for complete environmental remediation of the polluted property. Due to their efforts, Phytotech, Inc. of South Brunswick is using its own funds to conduct phytoremediation at the site, a process using mustard plants to remove lead from soil.

Health: **Peter Doherty** of Morris Township was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 1991. Since then, he has worked tirelessly to educate other men about the disease and to create an emotional support network. He has counseled over 600 men, founded the Prostate Cancer Support Group at Morristown Memorial Hospital, and created the state's Prostate Cancer Network, which provides help through 25 chapters. Mr. Doherty also conceived New Jersey's "Conquer Cancer" license plate, the proceeds from which will support cancer research.

Human Needs: Ten young women from Ridgewood, Bergen County conducted a community-wide campaign on behalf of The New Jersey Organ and Tissue Sharing

Network. Over several weekends last autumn, the **Ridgewood High School Sophomore Donor Awareness Committee** worked in ten teams to canvas all 25,000 Ridgewood residents, advocating for self-selected organ donation. The young women collected over 7,000 organ donor cards and over 11,000 pledge forms for residents to discuss organ donation with family members.

Long Term Service: For thirty years, **Robert Koehler** of Convent Station, Morris County, has provided volunteer management support to Protestant Community Centers, Inc. and its parent, Community Agencies Corporation, in Newark. He is currently president of CAC's board of directors and helped to guide two major programs: SCEEP - Suburban Cultural Education and Enrichment Program, and B.A.B.I.E.S. - Border and Abandoned Babies: Intervention, Education and Support Services. He has also been an effective fundraiser for the non-profit.

Mobilization of Volunteers: **Adam Hornstine** attends Moorestown High School in Burlington County where he founded M.A.G.I.C., Moorestown Alliance for Goodwill and Interest in the Community. Through his leadership and recruitment skills, the club and its student volunteers performed three home renovations in Camden, collected 8,000 lbs. of food for the Food Bank of South Jersey, and created a playground from an abandoned lot in Camden. He solicited and received a grant from DO SOMETHING to help fund M.A.G.I.C. projects.

Public Safety: On December 28, 1997, a fire broke out in a row house in Riverside, Burlington County. **Lieutenant Anthony Congemi** and **Firefighter George Conard, Jr.** passed the location on their way to the station and saw a woman trapped on a porch roof. Using quick thinking and without the use of protective gear, the two young men were able to rescue the woman before the house became engulfed in flame. Mr. Congemi has been with Riverside Fire Company No. 1 for seven years and Mr. Conard has been with the company for four years.