

Office of the Governor

NEWS RELEASE

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GOVERNOR HIGHLIGHT FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY PROGRAMS VISITS "HOMEWORK HELPERS" IN MILLVILLE

Gov. Christie Whitman today highlighted the important role that faith-based community programs play in the lives of New Jersey children when she visited the Homework Helpers Program at Trinity United Methodist Church in Millville.

"It has been said that the only true gift you can give is a portion of yourself. The members of Trinity United Methodist Church are truly giving that portion and setting an example for communities across this state," said Gov. Whitman. "You are offering students a fun and safe place to go after school. You giving in a way that truly enriching your community and enriching New Jersey."

"In New Jersey, faith-based community programs are playing an important role in the revitalization and success of our cities and towns," said the Governor. "That's why in my Inaugural address earlier this year I pledged \$5 million in state assistance to support faith based non-profit organizations -- to encourage organizations like Trinity United Methodist Church to partner with nonprofit community development organizations and revitalize New Jersey one neighborhood at a time"

Gov. Whitman allocated \$5 million in the FY 99 budget to expand the Faith-based Community Development Initiative, which is run by the Department of Community Affairs. The program will provide the necessary funds to faith-based community development organizations to assist the state in revitalizing neighborhoods and will provide access to capacity building, feasibility studies, and grants to help faith-based community development organizations develop and implement strategic neighborhood improvement plans.

All faith-based community development organizations will be eligible to partner with nonprofit community development organizations and apply to the DCA for participation in the initiative.

The Governor and Pastor George J. Lynch, Jr, the organizer of Homework Helpers, toured the program and talked with student participants. She addressed students, parents and program volunteers during her visit and applauded their efforts in the community. The Governor also signed a proclamation to recognize and commend the program. A copy of the proclamation is attached.

"Homework Helpers", which began in February, is a two-day-a-week program that serves children ages 12 and under. The program, which is staffed by volunteers, offers area children homework assistance, activities, games, snacks and story reading. The program is administered by Trinity United Methodist Church, which also runs a clothes closet program, serves meals to community members and distributes food baskets to citizens in need.