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First Lady Mary Pat Christie Praises Work Inspiring At-Risk Youth to Pursue Successful Life Path

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Trenton, NJ – First Lady Mary Pat Christie today recognized the Annie E. Casey Foundation for its efforts to make a difference in the lives of at-risk youth via its Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). New Jersey, the nation's first model site for the program, is successfully implementing the initiative through the Juvenile Justice Commission in 14 counties across the state.

"Every young person has the potential to succeed," Mrs. Christie said during her welcoming remarks to a group of visiting juvenile justice professionals from the State of Nevada. "For some the path may be more challenging, but programs like this are doing real work to impact lives, often in profound and meaningful ways. I applaud the work that is being done here in the Garden State to inspire these young people to have pride in themselves and to move forward with the hope of a bright, positive future."

The overall goal of the JDAI initiative is to safely reduce unnecessary admissions to the juvenile detention system.

With the model state designation by the Casey Foundation, New Jersey provides others states and jurisdictions with an example of how to implement juvenile justice system reform successfully. The delegation from Nevada, which includes representatives from the Nevada General Assembly and Senate as well as judges, county and state representatives, is the fourth group to visit the Garden State to learn about statewide JDAI implementation.

New Jersey's Juvenile Justice Commission, established in 1995, is responsible for planning, policy development and provision of services in the State's juvenile justice system.

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