

[Home](#) [Newsroom](#) [Media](#) [Administration](#) [NJ's Priorities](#) [Contact Us](#)
[Press Releases](#) [Public Addresses](#) [Executive Orders](#) [Press Kit](#) [Reports](#)
[Home](#) > [Newsroom](#) > [Press Releases](#) > 2017

First Lady Mary Pat Christie Honors Accomplishments of KFM Making a Difference Founder Kerry Magro During Autism Awareness Month

Tuesday, April 11, 2017

Tags: [First Lady](#)

Hudson County Resident is 47th New Jersey Hero



Trenton, NJ - Continuing her commitment to autism awareness and empowerment, First Lady Mary Pat Christie today recognized Kerry Magro, founder of the non-profit organization *KFM Making a Difference*, as her second New Jersey Hero of 2017 and 47th Hero overall. Diagnosed with autism at the age of four, Magro is being honored for his efforts to increase understanding of the disability in addition to a post-secondary scholarship program he instituted for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

"Kerry truly personifies the attributes of a real hero," said First Lady Mary Pat Christie. "After overcoming the challenges of autism, he decided to use his experience to inspire and encourage other students to pursue their dreams and created a college scholarship program specifically for special needs students including those with ASD. For all of the accomplishments he has achieved to empower others, I'm proud to name Kerry Magro my 47th Hero."

Magro was an undergraduate student at Seton Hall University and started *KFM Making a Difference* from his own experiences searching for financial aid for autistic students, and the lack of programs for disabled persons on college campuses. Since starting *KFM* five years ago, he has distributed 38 scholarships to deserving students.

"For someone who was born and raised in Jersey City, New Jersey it's a dream come true to be named a New Jersey Hero," said Kerry Magro. "Growing up having autism, it's been a passion of mine to help those with autism and other special needs throughout the world succeed. Thanks to First Lady Mary Pat Christie, we can continue to shine a beautiful light on our community. We are forever grateful."

If you know someone who is interested in applying for the **Spring 2017 Making a Difference for Autism Scholarship**, the application deadline is May 1, 2017 at midnight. More information about the scholarship can be found at: <https://kfmmakingadifference.org/scholarship-programs-for-adults-with-autism/>. In addition to the scholarship fund, Magro's website includes an online support blog. Posts include helpful tips for autistic students, research regarding autism, and inspirational stories from scholarship winners as well as others in the community. He also hopes to expand his non-profit to help with employment opportunities and navigating post graduate obstacles for those with autism.

Magro has spoken at over 700 events around the country and internationally on disability related topics and bullying prevention. In 2014, he began working on his first solo documentary based on his life on the autism spectrum, and

Stay Connected
with Social Media

Stay Connected
with Email Alerts

LIKE THIS PAGE? SHARE IT
WITH YOUR FRIENDS.



has published two books on related topics. In addition, Magro is currently pursuing his doctorate in Educational Technology at New Jersey City University (NJCU).

April is Autism Awareness Month. On April 2, First Lady Mary Pat Christie spotlighted World Autism Awareness Day by illuminating Drumthwacket, the Governor's Official Residence, in the color blue. The most recent data from the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates that nationally, an average of one in 68 individuals have an ASD. One in 41 children in New Jersey is touched by autism, according to the same report.

New Jersey is considered to have one of the best systems in the nation for identifying, diagnosing and documenting children with ASD. Additionally, New Jersey is one of only eight states with an Autism Registry that requires reporting by neurologists, pediatricians, nurse practitioners and other autism providers so children can be referred for resources and services. Moreover, the Garden State is at the forefront of supporting autism research through the Governor's Council for Medical Research and Treatment of Autism. The Council has provided more than \$38 million in research grants since 2008 as well as with a Center for Excellence located at Montclair State University.

ASD represents a broad group of disorders that vary widely from mild to severe and is frequently diagnosed during the first three years of life. Most often, it is characterized by difficulties with social interaction and communication, severely limited interests and repetitive behaviors. ASD is four and half times more prevalent in boys than in girls and affects families of all races, ethnicities and socio-economic groups.

For more information about *KFM Making a Difference*, visit <http://kfmmakingadifference.org>

New Jersey Heroes is an initiative First Lady Mary Pat Christie began in 2010 to showcase the positive and unique ways people and organizations are impacting New Jersey and their communities. To nominate a hero, go to newjerseyheroes.org and follow the application instructions to submit the person you believe is a true New Jersey Hero.

###

Press Contact:
Brian Murray
609-777-2600



[Contact Us](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [Legal Statement & Disclaimers](#) | [Accessibility Statement](#) | 

Statewide: [NJ Home](#) | [Services A to Z](#) | [Departments/Agencies](#) | [FAQs](#)
Office of the Governor: [Home](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [Media](#) | [Administration](#) | [NJ's Priorities](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2017
Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000