

# First Lady Mary Pat Christie Names Emily O'Donnell of the Helen L. Diller Vacation Home for the Blind as 42nd New Jersey Hero

Thursday, August 18, 2016 Tags: [First Lady](#)



Stay Connected with Social Media

Stay Connected with Email Alerts

LIKE THIS PAGE? SHARE IT WITH YOUR FRIENDS.



## Avalon Organization Offers Cost-Free Summer Camp to Blind and Visually Impaired Children



Trenton, NJ – First Lady Mary Pat Christie today praised the work of Emily O'Donnell, Camp Director of the Helen L. Diller Vacation Home for the Blind and named her the 42nd New Jersey Hero. Since 1972, the Avalon-based camp has been providing week-long summer vacations cost-free for blind and visually impaired children.

"Emily's passion and hard work are giving these young campers a life-enhancing opportunity to not only experience a seashore vacation, but also to develop confidence and important life skills," said First Lady Mary Pat Christie. "She is truly making a difference and I am proud to name Emily as our third New Jersey Hero of 2016 and our 42nd Hero overall."

Emily started at the Helen L. Diller Vacation Home as a Camp Counselor in 2009. She moved on to serve as an Assistant Director for two years before assuming her current position as Camp Director. As a teacher for the visually impaired, the Helen L. Diller Vacation Home holds a very close place in her heart.

"I am absolutely thrilled to be named the 42nd New Jersey Hero and to represent such an amazing non-profit organization," said Camp Director Emily O'Donnell. "It is an honor to work within a community that supports us in providing opportunities for special needs children to just be 'kids' and enjoy a vacation at the shore. Avalon, New Jersey is truly like no other place I have had the opportunity to work within. Because of the generosity of the local businesses and community members, we are able to continue our mission each season."

The Helen L. Diller Vacation Home operates for eight weeks between the months of June and August, with supervision by a team of knowledgeable, certified counselors and administrators.

Up to 20 children, ages 7 through 15 years old, reside in the home for a one-week period. Camp activities include arts and crafts, a learning series with the Bay Atlantic Symphony, crabbing, boardwalk excursions, and trips to a local water park and the Cape May County Zoo.

This year, the Vacation Home welcomed 160 children to stay with them between the months of June and August. Supporters include Tim Kerr Charities; The Avalon Lions Club; The William G and Helen C Hoffman Foundation and Matthew Mullin Memorial Foundation.

For more information, visit [www.dillerblindhome.org](http://www.dillerblindhome.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.

**Photo Caption:** Emily O'Donnell of the Helen L. Diller Vacation Home for the Blind has been named the 42nd New Jersey Hero by First Lady Mary Pat Christie.

###

**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