

First Lady Mary Pat Christie Honors Interfaith Food Pantry's Rosemary Gilmartin for Her Commitment to Hunger Prevention in the Morris County Community

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Former Pantry Volunteer is Named 31st New Jersey Hero



Trenton, NJ – First Lady Mary Pat Christie marked the Christie Administration's annual Season of Service by naming Rosemary Gilmartin, executive director of the Interfaith Food Pantry and Resource Center as her 31st New Jersey Hero and 7th Hero of 2014. Mrs. Christie is recognizing Ms. Gilmartin for her commitment to the issue of hunger prevention and ensuring that local families have the nutritious food they need.

"Over the years, first as a volunteer and now as executive director, Rosemary has worked tirelessly to address the issue of hunger in the community and has truly made a lasting impact in the lives of many local families," said Mrs. Christie. "She has been an integral force in encouraging volunteerism, developing innovative programs and expanding services to meet growing needs. During this season of hope and giving, I am proud to name Rosemary Gilmartin a New Jersey Hero."

Founded in 1994, Interfaith Food Pantry of Morris County provides food and groceries to eligible Morris County residents. Groceries are collected from a variety of sources, including houses of worship, businesses and schools; community service programs; local groups and organizations as well as individual donations. Each eligible family can visit the Pantry monthly where they have an opportunity to shop the shelves and select the food products of their choice.

In focusing their philanthropic efforts on hunger relief, Kings Food Markets partnered with NJ Heroes to award Rosemary Gilmartin for the work she is doing at the Interfaith Food Pantry.

"I am so honored to have been nominated by Kings Food Markets and selected to receive the NJ Heroes Award by First Lady Mary Pat Christie, but the real heroes to me are the many people from throughout the community who work hard every day to make the Interfaith Food Pantry and Resource Center a reality," said Rosemary Gilmartin. "In my opinion, the amazing volunteers who give so freely of their time and talents, the individuals and families who donate food and funds and also give generously through their houses of worship, companies, civic groups and schools, and all the community organizations that make this program truly what it is.... helping people move from hunger to hope, through neighbors helping neighbors.... these are the true heroes."

Last year alone, 893,154 pounds of food was distributed to 10,532 people in need throughout Morris County by the Interfaith Food Pantry. Each week, the Pantry distributes more than 15,000 pounds of food to 325 local families.

To meet the growing needs of the community, the Pantry has implemented a number of new programs, including:

- A new Home Delivery Program to meet the needs of housebound seniors and the disabled;

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A Client Choice Program that allows clients to select the items their family need directly from the pantry shelves. This enables clients to better meet dietary needs and restrictions since many have chronic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension and food allergies;

A Healthy Choice Program that helps clients learn about the important link between diet and health. The program also forges partnerships with local health facilities to provide free health screenings and health workshops to those in need;

Creation of an on-site Community Garden where fresh produce is grown and harvested for donation to clients;

A Thanksgiving Basket Program that proactively partners with many food providing agencies throughout Morris County in the distribution of turkeys and side dishes for a complete Thanksgiving meal for the hungry.

To learn more about Interfaith Food Pantry of Morris County, visit <http://www.mcifp.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.



First Lady Mary Pat Christie congratulates Rosemary Gilmartin on becoming the 31st NJ Hero.



First Lady Mary Pat Christie visits with one of the Pantry's shopping services assistants.

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