

First Lady Mary Pat Christie Recognizes Curémonos Founder Dora Arias for Her Commitment to Bringing Breast Cancer Awareness to Minority Communities

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Trenton, NJ – First Lady Mary Pat Christie has named Dora Arias, founder and executive director of *Curémonos* as the 6th New Jersey Hero of 2014. A Latina breast cancer survivor, Dora recognized the challenges women who speak English as a second language face in understanding their diagnosis and treatment options. She founded *Curémonos*, a grassroots community-based organization, to provide education, advocacy and support to medically underserved women dealing with breast cancer. Today's Hero represents a milestone as the 30th New Jerseyan recognized for the extraordinary work being done by citizens across the Garden State.

"Dora's story is so inspiring. A breast cancer survivor herself, Dora saw a need within the community and is bringing hope, courage and emotional support to women at a critical time in their lives," said Mrs. Christie. "Whether it's accompanying patients to doctor's appointments, interpreting or providing financial resources, she is truly making a difference by empowering these women about their breast health. I am proud to name Dora Arias as our 6th New Jersey Hero of 2014 and 30th Hero in just four years."

Since its inception *Curémonos* has educated over 2,000 women on the importance of breast health and early detection of breast cancer while serving over 300 medically underserved and underinsured women. Clients are served bilingually, biculturally and free of charge.

In addition, the organization has educated over 75 healthcare providers on the cultural aspects and needs of Latinas affected by breast cancer, established a support group in Spanish at the Summit YMCA and developed various one-day programs to help breast cancer patients and their families during their time of need.

First Lady Mary Pat Christie made her New Jersey Heroes presentation during a "Day of Pampering" *Curémonos* organized for breast cancer survivors and patients at Sofi's Color Salon in Summit. The day of pampering, which consists of full makeovers free of cost, is one of the organization's most successful events and gives the women personalized attention while providing an opportunity for them to regain their self-esteem.

"*Curémonos* has been the product of countless hours of hard work, tears, and many sacrifices, but beyond that, it is the product of love and passion," said founder Dora Arias. "I am humbled to receive the New Jersey Heroes Award and would like to thank Mrs. Christie for recognizing my work in the Latino community and for giving me the platform to create awareness about *Curémonos* and the plight of underserved communities affected by breast cancer. With this award, I hope to further the mission of *Curémonos* so that underserved women and men affected by this devastating disease are not alone in their journey."

Dora was instrumental in having New Jersey Congressman Leonard Lance introduce the "Breast Cancer Patient Education Act" of 2012 (H.R.5937). She has been featured and interviewed on the Today Show and was honored by Family Matters - as a Local Hero - Guiding Light. In 2012, she was named a "Model of Courage" by Ford Warriors in Pink and a Patient of Courage by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons.

Breast cancer is the second most frequently diagnosed cancer among women in the United States, after skin cancer. In fact, every two minutes a new diagnosis of breast cancer occurs. Today, there are more than 2.8 million breast

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cancer survivors in the United States.

To learn more about *Curémonos*, visit <http://www.curemonos.org/>.

New Jersey Heroes is an initiative First Lady Mary Pat Christie began four years ago 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 Dora Arias, founder of *Curémonos* as her 30th New Jersey Hero. (l-r: Dora Arias, First Lady Mary Pat Christie, Assemblywoman Nancy Munoz)



First Lady Mary Pat Christie and *Curémonos* breast cancer survivors congratulate Dora Arias as the 30th New Jersey Hero.

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