

"Young Mahwah Environmental Activist Is NJ's Latest 'Hero'"

Friday, August 01, 2014 Tags: [First Lady](#)



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Allison Pries
July 30, 2014
Bergen Record

Eric Fuchs-Stengel spent Saturday with other young adults hauling tires, metal, recyclable refuse and just plain trash out of Mahwah's woods. Tuesday's schedule was just as nature-friendly: harvesting beets with New Jersey's first lady, Mary Pat Christie, in a garden his group, Mahwah Environmental Volunteers Organization or MEVO, built with safe techniques on polluted land donated by the Bergen Community College.

But it also included formal state recognition of the 22-year-old Fuchs-Stengel's dedication to all things Nature: The governor's wife had really come to the Paramus campus to name him the 29th New Jersey Hero. Christie, who said she, too, had a green thumb before her public status consumed her time, also toured the 10 beehives and plants growing on a small farm at the far end of the campus.

Cleaning up the environment and promoting sustainability are the two efforts of MEVO, a group founded by teenagers and run by teens and young adult volunteers. Fuchs-Stengel was recognized by Christie for his organization's Farm to Live program, one of two programs MEVO operates that use two organic farms on donated land to improve access to healthy food for low-income families.

The NJ Heroes program was started by Christie in December 2010 to showcase the positive and unique ways people and organizations are impacting the state and their communities.

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Full article [HERE](#).

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Transcript:

Question: What's going to happen to people like me who have been paying in our entire lives? What's going to happen to that pension if new people are not paying into the pension? Where is the money going to come from for those who are retiring or those who are ready for retirement?

Governor Christie: We have about \$80 billion in the pension funds right now, and they are underfunded, and I've put more money into the pension system than any governor in the history of this state, \$2.9 billion more than any governor in the history of the state. The fact is that promises were made by folks over the course of years in terms of benefits that are being paid out in the pension system that were never paid for, and you're right, there were governors over a long period of time who paid nothing into the pension system over their entire terms—

And took money from the pension system.

Governor Christie: Well nobody ever took money from the pension system.

Well, used it for various projects.

Governor Christie: No, no, listen, people never took money from the pension system. What occurred was they didn't make their contributions to the pension system and they may have used it for something else that they and the Legislature by the way chose to do at the time. But nobody ever took money out of the pension system. That's unlawful. It's not permitted and it hasn't been done. So there's a lot of emotion that goes along with this issue. But the facts are pretty simple. The facts are that this pension will go bankrupt if we don't make significant changes to it.

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Press Contact:
Michael Drewniak
Kevin Roberts
609-777-2600



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Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000