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## First Lady Mary Pat Christie Leads Nation's First Spouses in Raising Awareness of Down Syndrome Cognitive Research

Wednesday, March 20, 2013

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### *Drumthwacket to be Illuminated in Blue as Part of National Light the Way Initiative*

**Trenton, NJ** – Recognizing the groundbreaking advances being made in the area of Down syndrome cognitive research, First Lady Mary Pat Christie announced today that Drumthwacket, the Governor's Official Residence, will be lit in blue Thursday evening, March 21, to support the national *Light the Way* initiative. This year, Mrs. Christie is being joined by First Spouses from 22 states and territories, including Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Virgin Islands, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming in endorsing this event.

"I have been inspired by so many outstanding initiatives that are making a real difference in communities throughout the Garden State and the nation," said Mrs. Christie. "That's why I am pleased to once again support this effort, which brings a fresh approach to the long-standing, complex issues related to the needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities. I applaud the work being done by organizations like Research Down Syndrome (RDS) to support the development of treatments to further empower individuals with Down syndrome."

This year's *Light the Way* event is being observed on World Down Syndrome Day, March 21, 2013. The date is particularly meaningful because Down syndrome results from the presence of three copies of chromosome 21. Down syndrome is the most common chromosomal disorder, affecting over 400,000 in the United States. It occurs in approximately 1 in every 700 births.

"Research Down Syndrome is grateful for the continuing support by the First Spouses of the *Light the Way* program. We are privileged that they are joining our efforts to Empower the Extraordinary," said Dr. Robert Schoen, President of RDS.

Down syndrome cognitive research is a rapidly advancing area of research that holds great promise for improving memory, learning and communication for individuals of all ages with Down syndrome. The goal of the *Light the Way* program is to expand awareness of Down syndrome cognitive research, including the efforts of the non-profit foundation RDS to fund this research.

For more information, visit [www.researchchs.org](http://www.researchchs.org), or contact RDS: [info@researchchs.org](mailto:info@researchchs.org)

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