

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Bonnie Franklin: bfrankli@ramapo.edu or Rosa Diaz-Mulryan: rmulryan@ramapo.edu

October 13, 2004

**COMMUNITY PARTNER EXTRAORDINAIRE AWARDS PRESENTED BY
RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY'S CAHILL CENTER**

(Mahwah) – Two community leaders, Michel Wouters, chief executive officer of Prestige Shipping in Ramsey and Bea O'Rourke, director of the Northwest Center for Food Action in Mahwah, were presented with Community Partner Extraordinaire awards on September 21 by The Governor William T. Cahill Center for Experiential Learning and Career Services at Ramapo College of New Jersey.

“These partners have been long-standing community partners with reputations for excellence and commitment to the College's mission,” says Donna Kauder, director of corporate development for the Cahill Center. “They have both served as mentors to our students, contributed countless hours to the College, its programs and students. Both are also highly active in their respective communities.”

Michel Wouters is a longtime corporate partner of The Cahill Center and has served as an advisory board member to Ramapo College's international cooperative education program and to the center. He mentors students embarking on international co-ops. In addition to students being placed in co-op positions at Prestige Shipping, a freight forwarding company, Wouters has employed graduates of Ramapo College. Wouters also has worked on several College philanthropic projects, including shipping computer equipment to Africa. Both of the executive's children attend Ramapo College.

Bea O'Rourke is director of the Northwest Center for Food Action. The New Jersey-based organization has been working with individuals and families in crisis for more than 26 years to prevent hunger and homelessness. From five sites in Bergen and

- more -

Passaic Counties, they provide emergency food, advocacy and rent and utility assistance. O'Rourke is a volunteer lecturer at Ramapo College and coordinates service opportunities and internships at non-profit organizations in Bergen and Passaic Counties. She has been an activist and advocate for children, women and the underprivileged for more than 50 years. O'Rourke is a former volunteer for the Women's Commission where she was instrumental in the Commission's first report "Crimes of Violence Against Women – Rape and Battered Women." The report helped secure funding for services to women whose lives were impacted by violence. A certified New Jersey social worker, gerontologist, teacher, REIKI practitioner and published writer, O'Rourke was a chief of staff in the U.S. Congress and a higher education director of continuing education.

The Cahill Center works with over 1,600 community partners annually and has been recognizing outstanding partners for the past two decades. The Governor William T. Cahill Center for Experiential Learning and Career Services enhances and supports the educational mission of Ramapo College by offering an array of programs to help students explore career choices and to understand the value of their education in relation to work. Among them: career advisement, academically-relevant work experience, international work experience and academically-based community service.

###