



The Russ Berrie Award for **MAKING A
DIFFERENCE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR UNSUNG HEROES IN NEW JERSEY
FOR THE RUSS BERRIE AWARD FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

*For Tenth Year, Everyday Heroes to Receive Extraordinary Recognition
for Uncommon Acts for the Common Good*

Deadline for Nominations Is February 17, 2006

MAHWAH, N.J., January 1, 2006 —Nominations for the 2006 Russ Berrie Award for Making a Difference will be accepted by The Russell Berrie Foundation until February 17. New Jerseyans who have made a significant difference in their communities are eligible for cash grants of up to \$50,000.

Now in its tenth year, the awards will be presented in June at Ramapo College of New Jersey in Mahwah. The program was established in 1996 by the late Russ Berrie, founder of Russ Berrie and Company, Inc., and Ramapo College of New Jersey. It recognizes “unsung heroes” from throughout the state of New Jersey who have made a significant difference to the well-being of their community and for whom the award would make a significant difference in their own lives.

Up to 19 unsung heroes will be recognized. The Russell Berrie Foundation —named in 2001 as the Outstanding Foundation by the Association for Fundraising Professionals (New Jersey Chapter) — will provide monetary awards of up to \$50,000, \$35,000 and \$25,000 as well as runner-up grants of \$2,500 each.

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Call for Nominations/ADD ONE

“Through this award, we honor the contributions of people who don’t seek recognition for what they do, yet generously give of themselves to make the world a better place,” said Angelica Berrie of Englewood, who leads the philanthropic efforts of the Foundation.

Nominees will be reviewed by an Advisory Board, which is co-chaired by Josh S. Weston, chairman of Russ Berrie and Company, Inc., and Dr. Peter P. Mercer, president of Ramapo College of New Jersey. The Board, comprising eminent New Jersey business leaders and professionals, will evaluate nominations submitted by community groups, houses of worship, educators, representatives of the media and others. Following this evaluation, based on criteria refined by the Board, the group will present the awards at the June ceremony.

Last year, the top honorees included a Mine Hill mother of 10 children and foster mother of 20 more who founded an organization to provide food and clothing for the homeless; a Norwood obstetrician who annually offers his services to poor and underserved women in Haiti, and a widowed father from Port Norris who continues to care for the surviving three of four children with Downs’ Syndrome he and his late wife adopted as babies.

For more information on The Russ Berrie Award for Making a Difference or to nominate someone, please contact:

The Russ Berrie Award for Making a Difference
c/o Office of the President
Ramapo College of New Jersey
505 Ramapo Valley Road
Mahwah, New Jersey 07430
Phone: (201) 684-7910.

Nomination forms are also available on the Internet at www.russberrie.com or www.ramapo.edu. Once again, the deadline for entries is Friday, February 17.

Russ Berrie founded Russ Berrie and Company, Inc. in 1963, and over the last 40 years built the company into the world’s premier gift company. In addition to his business accomplishments, Berrie devoted boundless energy and resources to numerous charitable causes.

Sharing that passion to make the world a better place, Angelica Berrie serves as Worldwide Chair of Gilda’s Club, a free support community for men, women and children living with cancer, their families and friends. She heads the Russell Berrie Foundation in its work to foster continuity and enrichment of Jewish communal life, support issues of health, either research or treatment, with emphasis on diabetes and humanism in medicine, and recognize individuals who have made a significant difference in the lives of others.

Call for Nominations/ADD TWO

Russ Berrie and Company, Inc. a leader in the gift industry (and its wholly-owned subsidiaries) designs, develops and distributes a variety of innovative gift and juvenile products to specialty and mass market retailers worldwide. Known for its teddy bears and other plush animals, the Company's gift and juvenile lines are comprised of a diverse range of everyday, seasonal and occasion-themed products that help people celebrate milestones in their lives. Today the company operates offices, showrooms and distribution centers all over the world and trades on the NYSE under symbol RUS.

Ramapo College of New Jersey is the state's public liberal arts college, serving 5,200 undergraduate and graduate students from more than 20 states and 60 nations. The College named its newly opened center for performing and visual arts, the site of the Russ Berrie Award for Making a Difference ceremony, in honor of both Mr. Berrie and his wife Angelica.