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Contact: Bonnie Franklin: [bfrankli@ramapo.edu](mailto:bfrankli@ramapo.edu) or Rosa Diaz-Mulryan: [rmulryan@ramapo.edu](mailto:rmulryan@ramapo.edu)

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**RAMAPO COLLEGE CELEBRATES THE BIRTHDAY OF THE LATE  
RUSSELL BERRIE**

(Mahwah) – Ramapo College of New Jersey is pleased to announce the college's participation in a tribute to the late Russ Berrie, the businessman and philanthropist, on the occasion of his birthday, March 18. The college, along with other institutions and organizations that have benefited from Mr. Berrie's generosity, will take part in a ceremony Friday, March 16 at 1 p.m. at the Bergen Performing Arts Center in Englewood.

Through the Russ Berrie Award for Making a Difference program, almost 200 New Jersey residents have been recognized as "unsung heroes" for making a significant difference to the well-being of their community and for whom the award made a significant difference in their own lives. The award program was established in 1996 by the late Russ Berrie, founder of Russ Berrie and Company, Inc., and Ramapo College.

The Russell Berrie Foundation, named in 2001 as the Outstanding Foundation by the Association for Fundraising Professionals (New Jersey Chapter), has provided monetary awards of up to \$50,000, \$35,000 and \$25,000, as well as runner-up grants of \$2,500 each, to recipients. The awards are presented each year at a ceremony held at Ramapo College.

"Ramapo College is honored to be in partnership with the Berrie Foundation in implementing the Russ Berrie Award for Making A Difference," says Peter P. Mercer, president of Ramapo College. "We have witnessed recipients use the award dollars as seed money to do such wonderful things as starting their own charitable organizations.

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The Berrie Award does not end on the day of the award ceremony; it has a life of its own in the hands of outstanding people who make important contributions to their communities.”

Mr. Berrie’s generosity, and that continued through the Russell Berrie Foundation, impacts lives. For instance:

- Project Linus, NJ, Inc. began as a grassroots effort that donated 3,000 handmade blankets a year to fragile New Jersey children undergoing treatment and care. As a result of the award, says Hillary Roberts, president, Project Linus is a statewide, volunteer network of 5,900 community minded crafters. More than 60,000 children have been comforted during a traumatic experience. With reference to Mr. Berrie, Roberts notes, “He enabled and inspired grassroots organizations like Project Linus to push forward, to identify need and to put ideas into action.”
- Father Ronald Stanley, the director of campus ministries at Ramapo College, organizes bi-annual BRIDGES service trips to the Dominican Republic. He says, “The Russ Berrie Award has made it possible for our student volunteers to accomplish new and wonderful things during our bi-annual service trips. We have painted schools, installed basketball and volleyball courts, bought school uniforms, purchased a fishing boat, funded construction of houses and provided 24-hour electricity for a high school residence. The award is being husbanded with care to enhance our student’s work over the next few years.”
- Joann Tyler, vice president of Missionaries of God-NJ, used the award money to purchase appliances needed in the organization’s kitchen to help feed the homeless in Dover, NJ. She and her staff donated money to individuals who were not able to pay their rent, utilities or bills. They also purchased a “gift” for each of the clientele they serve, such as coats, hats, shoes, boots and medicine.
- Fred Carl used his award to continue his preservation efforts at Camp Evans. He reactivated the National Broadcasters Hall of Fame. In addition, a

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children's hands-on room was dedicated to the science behind radio communication. "The award helped me realize that I had made a positive difference and that people will benefit from this work."

- From Houses to Homes-Guatemala Executive Director James F. Collins built a home for the Ojot Melgar family in that country in honor of Angelica Berrie, Russell's wife.
- Dr. Brian Ullmann started a dental clinic at Eva's Village in Paterson about six years ago. He used the award money to purchase new cabinetry for the clinic, allowing him a clean and professional workspace to practice dentistry.
- Milton Hunter Halvorsen, a social worker, donated his award to the We Must Care Organization, based in Ridgefield, NJ dedicated to prevent the sexual abuse, rape, torture, mutilization and murder of children.
- Amanda Feldman, a 19-year-old, received the award when she was 14. She used the money to continue her volunteer work and to help provide clean water, books and educational supplies to children in rural Ghana, West Africa. She also traveled there to meet the people she helped. She says of Mr. Berrie, "His humanitarian and caring nature inspired me to continue to strive to make a positive difference in the lives of those less fortunate."

In addition, the Ramapo College Foundation will recognize Berrie Award recipients at a performance of Nordic Fiddle Fest! featuring Frigg, Saturday, April 21.

The 2007 Russ Berrie Award for Making a Difference ceremony will be held Friday, May 18 on the campus of Ramapo College.

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