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**CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE STUDIES
AT RAMAPO COLLEGE LAUNCHES GENOCIDE AND HUMAN RIGHTS
EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROJECT**

MAHWAH – The Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Ramapo College of New Jersey will launch the Genocide and Human Rights Education and Training Project with funding from a \$45,000 grant awarded by The Gumpert Foundation.

The goal of the Genocide and Human Rights Education and Training Project, says Dr. Michael Riff, director of the Center, is to sensitize the college, K-12 education and law enforcement communities of northern New Jersey on the dangers of hatred based on perceived differences and violations of human rights going unchecked in society. “Events in Darfur, Kenya and former Yugoslavia, as well as increasing hate crime incidents, warrant a heightened focus on education, training and consciousness raising to combat bigotry and to improve our ability to prevent genocide,” he said. The grant will help the Center further programming in these areas.

The initiatives undertaken by the Center stress interactive factual discourse, ongoing professional development and discussion of personal responsibility. Among the

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programs funded by the grant: development of a Human Rights track in the College's International Studies major; educational and professional development courses about human rights and genocide including an undergraduate course at Ramapo College for students enrolled in the Teacher Education program; the expansion of workshops for educators to include a special series on human and civil rights; training for law enforcement professionals and a model course on "*Human Rights and Genocide*" for undergraduate pre-law and criminal justice programs and a "*Heroes of Conscience*" Lecture Series and Residency at Ramapo College. These initiatives will be enacted in 2009, followed by an evaluation of their effectiveness.

Founded in 1980 as an independent non-profit organization to sensitize the northern New Jersey community to the tragedy of Hitler's war against the Jews and other genocides, the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies is an integral part of Ramapo College. The Center's mission is to encourage and assist persons of all ages in learning the history and lessons of the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide and other similar tragedies with the hope that understanding the consequences of anti-Semitism, racism, ethnic hatred and other forms of bigotry will help people to build a better future.

The Gumpert Foundation is named for William K. Gumpert, a California attorney and longtime Center benefactor who passed away in 2007. The Foundation was established under a bequest before his passing to foster a series of initiatives in genocide and human rights education.

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