



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

Office of Communications and Public Affairs

Press Release

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

*Uncommon Acts for the Common Good
Earn Everyday Heroes Extraordinary Recognition
Deadline for Nominations Is February 14*

MAHWAH, N.J., January 6, 2014 - Nominations for the 2014 Russ Berrie Award for Making a Difference will be accepted by The Russell Berrie Foundation through February 14. New Jerseyans who have made a significant difference in their communities through a lifetime of service or a single heroic act are eligible for cash awards of up to \$50,000. Members of the community are invited to nominate New Jersey residents whose deeds, carried out in the state, make them worthy of recognition.

Established in 1996 by the late Russell Berrie, founder of Russ Berrie and Company, Inc. and the Russell Berrie Foundation, and Ramapo College of New Jersey, the awards honor "unsung heroes" from throughout the state. Up to 11 individuals will be recognized for making a significant difference to the well-being of their community during the annual spring award ceremony at Ramapo College in Mahwah. The Russell Berrie Foundation will provide monetary awards of up to \$50,000 and up to eight runner-up grants of \$5,000 each.

"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, president of The Russell Berrie Foundation.

Nominees will be reviewed by an Advisory Board, which is co-chaired by Josh S. Weston, honorary chairman, Automatic Data Processing, Inc., and Dr. Peter P. Mercer, president of Ramapo College of New Jersey. The Board, comprised of eminent New Jersey business leaders and professionals, will evaluate nominations submitted by individuals, 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 a ceremony on April 30, 2014.

Last year, the top honorees included a woman who established an emergency shelter during Hurricane Sandy at her church and continued, with the help of volunteers, to assist her neighbors during and after the storm; a 24-year-old who saved the life of a woman who accidentally fell on the tracks in the path of an oncoming train; the founder of an organization that provides much needed services to homeless veterans who congregate in Newark's Penn Station; and a woman who created a non-profit agency to help impoverished families who strive to achieve economic independence.

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: 201.684.7179

Nomination forms are also available on the Internet <http://www.ramapo.edu/berrie-awards/>. The deadline for entries is February 14.

The Russell Berrie Foundation, established in 1985, works to foster continuity and enrichment of Jewish communal life, support issues of health with an emphasis on diabetes and humanism in medicine and strengthen New Jersey communities.

Ramapo College of New Jersey is the state's public liberal arts college, serving more than 6,000 undergraduate and graduate students. The College, which has more than 539 course offerings and 36 academic programs, is one of 226 institutions recommended by The Princeton Review in the "Best in the Northeast" section in the 2014 edition of *2014 Best Colleges: Region By Region*. The campus center for performing and visual arts – the site of the Russ Berrie Award for Making a Difference ceremony – is named in honor of both Mr. Berrie and his wife, Angelica.

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Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as sixth in the Best Regional Universities North category for public institutions, Ramapo College of New Jersey is sometimes mistaken for a private college. This is, in part, due to its unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its size of approximately 6,008 students and its pastoral setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work. In addition, Ramapo College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers six graduate programs as well as articulated programs with Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.