



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Office of Communications and Public Relations

Press Release

February 12, 2015

Contact: Stephen J. Hudik

E-mail: shudik@ramapo.edu

madaawards@ramapo.edu

Phone: 201.684.7845

NOMINATIONS DEADLINE EXTENDED 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 Friday, February 20*

MAHWAH, NJ – Nominations for the 2015 Russ Berrie Award for Making a Difference have been extended through February 20. 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. The Russell Berrie Foundation sponsors the program.

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” statewide. 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 prominent 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 May 1, 2015.

Last year, the top honorees included a nurse practitioner who established a family clinic that has provided more than 3,000 patients with primary care services, immunizations and pediatric, ophthalmology and dermatological services; a woman who founded a 12-bed program for

homeless pregnant women, mothers and children; and a businessman who, with the support of two churches, runs a full-time facility that has provided more than 53,000 meals for local residents who are in need.

Bill Strickland, president and chief executive officer of Manchester Bidwell Corporation and its subsidiaries, Manchester Craftsmen's Guild and Bidwell Training Center, is the keynote speaker. Strickland envisioned a template for social change and formed relationships with businesses, government officials and individuals who shared his vision. Today, Manchester Bidwell Corporation has evolved into a national model for education, culture and hope.

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 20.

About The Russell Berrie Foundation

The Russell Berrie Foundation was established in 1985 by Russell Berrie, an American entrepreneur and philanthropist. Russell Berrie had a passion for giving that was grounded in his deep belief in humanity, the importance of touching the lives of ordinary people, the importance of strengthening the local community in New Jersey and the power of using philanthropy to help achieve transformational change. The Russell Berrie Foundation seeks to continue Russ' mission by providing significant support to strengthen New Jersey's art, cultural and health care institutions and celebrates everyday people who make a significant difference in the lives of others through the Russ Berrie for Making a Difference Award.

The Foundation also supports programs and initiatives in other areas that express Mr. Berrie's personal philanthropic commitments such as promoting the continuity, diversity and enrichment of Jewish communal life locally and internationally; supporting advances in medicine focusing on diabetes research, care and humanism in medicine; fostering the spirit of religious understanding and pluralism, and elevating salesmanship as a profession.

###

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 seven 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.