



**RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**Office of Marketing and Communications**  
**Press Release**  
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## **Ramapo College Opens Satellite Office of HealingSPACE Sexual Violence Resource Center on Mahwah Campus**

MAHWAH, N.J. -- Ramapo College of New Jersey held a ribbon cutting ceremony to open a satellite office of the YWCA Northern NJ HealingSPACE Sexual Violence Resource Center on the College's Mahwah campus. The new space, located in the Lodge at the College Park Apartments complex on campus, was the centerpiece of a \$336,000 grant received by the Office of the New Jersey Attorney General to develop violence prevention programs and increase the availability of direct clinical services for survivors. Students will have access to an on-site education and prevention specialist and clinician and can call the crisis hotline 24 hours, seven days a week.

Kat McGee, Ramapo College's director of Title IX, introduced Ramapo President Peter P. Mercer, Helen Archontou, CEO of YWCA Northern NJ and Diana Gonzalez, New Jersey Deputy Secretary of Higher Education, who offered remarks to the crowd of students, staff, administration and special guests in attendance.

"Our highest priority is to provide an environment that is safe for all students to live and learn. We strive to educate against sexual violence and provide a supportive environment to survivors," said President Mercer. "There was time in our history, on the heels of the civil rights and student movements, when our Women's Center served as a de-facto sexual violence resource center for Bergen County. In the mid-1970's, before local and state agencies dedicated to addressing sexual violence existed, the Women's Center served survivors from across the county... who sought medical and legal referrals, counseling and support. As more students began sharing their experiences in consciousness-raising groups and 'Take Back the Night' rallies, many college campuses such as ours became epicenters of a grassroots movement to break the silence surrounding sexual violence. This new HealingSPACE office will increase the availability of clinical services for survivors on campus, in addition to the services available in the Center for Health and Counseling Services."

Said Archontou, “This is such a powerful resource for the Ramapo College community. It serves as a model for something that should be present statewide on college campuses. It is pretty impressive that Ramapo has had such a steady and strong commitment to support its students who need a safe space, and I’m thrilled to see those efforts have resulted in this wonderful resource.”

Deputy Secretary Gonzalez noted that, just a year ago, the Attorney General issued standards for providing services for victims of sexual assault, as well as a Student Bill of Rights. “It’s a joy to see that Ramapo is taking action to provide resources for students,” she said, encouraging the students present to “continue to be empowered and lift your voices, and continue to advocate for change.”

Event sponsors included Ramapo College’s Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Compliance, Office of Violence Prevention and Title IX Committee, and YWCA of Northern NJ.

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Ramapo College of New Jersey is the state’s premier public liberal arts college and is committed to academic excellence through interdisciplinary and experiential learning, and international and intercultural understanding. The College is ranked #1 among New Jersey public institutions by College Choice, and is recognized as a top college by *U.S. News & World Report*, *Kiplinger’s*, Princeton Review and *Money* magazine, among others. Ramapo College is also distinguished as a Career Development College of Distinction by CollegesofDistinction.com, boasts the best campus housing in New Jersey on Niche.com, and is designated a “Military Friendly College” in Victoria Media’s *Guide to Military Friendly Schools*.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor’s degrees in the arts, business, data science, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include business, education, nursing and social work. In addition, the College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels, and offers graduate programs leading to master’s degrees in Accounting, Business Administration, Data Science, Educational Technology, Educational Leadership, Nursing, Social Work and Special Education.