



NJDOE News

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'Seeds of Service' Theme of Statewide Conference

Commissioner of Education William L. Librera will help launch New Jersey's first statewide national and community service conference on Thursday and Friday (May 9-10). The conference, "[Cultivating the Seeds of Service](#)," will bring together citizens of all ages and backgrounds who contribute to their communities through full-time service and volunteerism.

The event will begin on Thursday evening and will continue throughout the day on Friday at the Sheraton Atlantic City Convention Center Hotel. More than 450 participants are expected to attend.

"This conference takes place at a time when America's spirit of patriotism and tradition of service are called upon to help our country and our communities address the great challenges before us," said Commissioner Librera.

In addition to Commissioner Librera, the conference will feature remarks from two national leaders of service and volunteerism: Robert Goodwin, president and chief executive officer of the Points of Light Foundation, and Rosie K. Mauk, national director of AmeriCorps, Corporation for National and Community Service.

New Jersey currently has 500 AmeriCorps members and 12,000 Senior Service Corps members. Also, more than 20,000 students are engaged in community service and service-learning activities in New Jersey. These volunteers address a wide range of community issues in education, human needs, the environment, homeland security and public safety.

The conference will recognize programs that supported humanitarian efforts related to the terror attacks of September 11 as well as New Jersey schools that have been singled out for their excellence in service-learning programs for students.

Conference workshops will focus on national service programs, legal issues, homeland security, grant and fund-raising opportunities, resources for volunteer centers, youth policy issues, intergenerational programs, service-learning, and service by and for individuals with disabilities.

AmeriCorps is the national service program that has been referred to as "the domestic Peace Corps." Donald Bowling, chair of the New Jersey Commission on National and Community Service, commended New Jerseyans of all ages "for their extraordinary commitment, compassion and energy in serving those who need our help." Conference chair James DeBold called upon citizens "to get involved, share experiences, and learn about the great service that is going on in our state."

The conference is a joint endeavor of the New Jersey State Department of Education and the New Jersey Commission on National and Community Service. Fleet Bank is the major conference sponsor; Johnson & Johnson and PSE&G have also provided support.

For more information, contact Rowena Madden, executive director of the New Jersey Commission on National and Community Service, 609-633-9627.