

NEWS

VOLUNTEER CENTER OF BERGEN COUNTY, INC.

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Community Chest Funds Volunteer Center

The Volunteer Center of Bergen County has been notified that it will receive a grant of \$3,000 from the Community Chest serving Englewood, Tenafly and Englewood Cliffs. The Community Chest grant will provide unrestricted support for Volunteer Center programs

The Volunteer Center programs are divided into three main categories: Community Volunteer Services, Business Volunteer Services and Direct Volunteer Services.

Community Volunteer Services:

The Referral Service connects thousands of people annually with volunteer opportunities at hundreds of public and private non-profit agencies in and near Bergen County. Students, school groups, community, civic and faith-based organizations can obtain the *Guide to Volunteering*, a comprehensive directory of volunteer opportunities. This information is also posted in searchable form on the Center's website: www.bergenvolunteers.org

Volunteer Ventures is a group of busy, working adults, which helps agencies with evening and weekend group volunteer projects.

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), links senior volunteers age 55 and older with non-profit agencies where their time, interests, talents, knowledge and experience can be effectively utilized to meet important needs in our community.

The Volunteer Management Institute and the Volunteer Leadership Institute, respectively, deliver topical and relevant training in volunteer program management and in Board and leadership development, helping non-profit and governmental agencies to better engage volunteers and administer their organizations through sound management practices.

The Volunteer Center offers the Points of Light Youth Leadership Institute (PYLI), an interactive leadership development course, to schools and youth groups, which can be tailored to individual groups' needs. Visitors to the new **BergenVolunTEENS** page on the Center's website can get ideas about volunteer projects, learn about national days of service and search for volunteer jobs available nearby. The site also links to many other youth volunteer-related websites.

The Volunteer Center leads the Bergen County VOAD (Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster), an alliance of agencies that assists the Bergen County Office of Emergency Management, the American Red Cross and other first responders in preparing for and responding to disasters, whether natural or man-made.

The Volunteer Center sponsors the All Wrapped Up holiday giving program to link individuals and families in need with willing donors during the holiday season. Last year, nearly \$400,000 was generated to assist more than 4,700 people.

New for 2008, the Volunteer Center will be sponsoring **Bergen LEADS**, a year-long community leadership and learning experience for adults who live and/or work in Bergen County. The interactive and experiential curriculum will address critical issues facing the Bergen County community, while offering participants the opportunity to understand and develop their leadership style. A critical component of the curriculum is community trusteeship, in which participants will learn to use their new-found knowledge of the community to affect positive change. The inaugural class of 30 participants will begin monthly classes in September 2008.

Business Volunteer Services

The Business Volunteer Services department helps area businesses seeking to engage their employees in service activities. Through the Northern New Jersey Business Volunteer Council, nearly 40 area businesses with 35,000 employees participate in strategic initiatives that meet the needs of children and families. Since 2000, the BVC has generated more than \$900,000 in resources while fostering collaboration between member companies and community organizations.

Direct Service Programs:

The Volunteer Center sponsors several programs in which volunteers are trained and supervised to provide services directly to people in need.

Mentoring Programs – two programs recruit, train, screen, and provide ongoing supervision and support to caring adults who serve as mentors through one-on-one relationships.

Volunteers in Protective Services (VIPS) are mentors, friends and role models to troubled, abused or neglected children, helping children to see a positive future and, hopefully breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect.

Mentoring Moms serve as friends and role models to isolated, overwhelmed mothers in need of guidance in parenting and life skills. The volunteers spend time with mothers who have difficulty in coping with parenting, managing households, providing for their children or overcoming other obstacles.

Chore Service - crews of volunteers provide minor home repairs that help the elderly and disabled remain safe in their homes. Performing the minor but essential repairs that clients can neither do for themselves nor get anyone else to do for them, Chore can mean the difference between independence and institutionalization.

To find out more about supporting the community programs of the Volunteer Center, or to volunteer, call (201) 489-9454

The Volunteer Center of Bergen County strengthens the community by connecting people with opportunities to serve, operating model volunteer programs, building capacity for effective volunteering, and participating in strategic partnerships that meet community needs.

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