



National Council of Jewish Women
Essex County Section

Three Essex County Students Win the Nancy and Robert Eskow NCJW Community Service Award

*Students' Fundraising and Awareness Efforts Aid
Homeless Families, Darfur Genocide Victims, and
Hungry Families in the Community*

Livingston, N.J., October 14, 2010—Molly Bangs, Shamm Petros, and Ashlee Wright are three young women on a mission.

Moved by hardships facing individuals and families locally and across the globe, these recent high school graduates were not content to sit idly. Teaming up with school or community groups, each student separately spearheaded successful community service programs. In recognition of their commitment and dedication to community service, each was awarded the Nancy and Robert Eskow NCJW Community Service Award, which bestowed annually on graduating high school students from Essex County who have demonstrated a commitment and dedication to making life better for others locally or globally. Winners receive \$500 and an award certificate.

Ms. Bangs, a 2010 graduate of Montclair High School who is now a freshman at Connecticut College, volunteered for three years through the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) of Essex County to help homeless families in the community. Inspired to increase her commitment, Molly decided to incorporate her love of running with her love of volunteerism. She established a 5K road race to raise funds to fight local homelessness. Despite slow progress, she stuck with the task, and many of the downtown Montclair stores and local community members came around to help support her project. She pulled off the 5K race and is now organizing it again for next year. She also enlisted two underclassmen from her high school to insure the continuation of the project.

Ms. Petros, a 2010 graduate of Irvington High School who is now a freshman at Columbia University, was moved by the genocide atrocities occurring in Darfur, Sudan. She established a nonprofit group called Never Again as part of the Save Darfur Coalition. To raise funds for her group, Ms. Petros coordinated a musical forum that included an original play she wrote, an opera performance, selections from the dance crew Multi-Pot, and the creation of a short film, "Voices from

Darfur.” The forum raised more than \$1,000 for genocide victims and introduced hundreds of people to the issue.

Ms. Wright, a 2010 graduate of Newark Vocational High School and now a freshman at Delaware State University, planned a Thanksgiving food drive to ensure that families affected by the economic downturn would be able to enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner. Working through her school’s honor society, of which she was a member, Ms. Wright’s collections were falling short of her goal. So she took it to the community, deciding to promote the food drive outside of the school environment. Through advertising, phone calls and much hard work, Ashlee collected enough food donations to feed every registered family that otherwise would have gone hungry on Thanksgiving.

The Nancy and Robert Eskow NCJW Community Service Award was established to reflect the mission and values of The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), a nonsectarian, grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms.

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