

## MONMOUTH COUNTY SHERIFF PROMOTES COMMUNITY AWARENESS THROUGH INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY AND COUNTY AWARENESS PROGRAM

By PIO Cynthia Scott and Executive Undersheriff Ted Freeman Monmouth County Sheriff's Office



Principal Richard Allen, Ilana Mitnitsky, Clerk Christine Hanlon & Sheriff Shaun Golden



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On June 14, 2017, six middle and high school aged students were recognized for completing the first Monmouth County Sheriff's Office Community and County Awareness Program at the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office, Public Safety Center in Freehold, New Jersey. These young men and women had completed a series of documented visits to municipal and county organizations, interviewed key people at each location, and prepared and submitted a report on the program.

### RECIPIENTS OF THE COMMUNITY AND COUNTY AWARENESS AWARD WERE:

- Aryana Manik - Barkalow Middle School - Freehold
- Melissa Kwong - Manalapan High School - Manalapan Township
- John McGreevy - Lillian Drive School - Hazlet
- Michael Caggiano - Barkalow Middle School - Freehold

### RECIPIENTS OF THE COMMUNITY AWARENESS AWARD WERE:

- Ilana Mitnitsky - Manalapan High School - Manalapan Township
- Lucia Buck - Woodmere School - Eatontown

To receive the Community Awareness Award, participants had to make nine documented visits to local organizations in their communities including:

- Police Department
- Firehouse
- Municipal Building
- First Aid Squad
- Attend a Town Council Meeting
- Local Library
- Local Service Club
- Boy Scout/Girl Scout Leader
- Local Museum

To receive the Community and County Awareness Award, three additional visits were required:

- Monmouth County Sheriff's Office
- Monmouth County Clerk's Office
- Monmouth County Sheriff's Office

The purpose of the Community and County Awareness Program is to make students aware of the importance of being involved in a democracy and how to be an effective citizen through participation and involvement; become aware of the local and county agencies, volunteer organizations and youth initiatives that provide essential services for the safety, security, and day-to-day operations of our communities and counties; and to provide an opportunity to learn about their community and county; and also to earn a recognition award for their efforts.

The idea for this program was suggested by Poseidon Early College High School Principal Richard Allen. Principal Allen, in discussion with Monmouth County Sheriff Shaun Golden, noted that students today no longer study Civics in school and may not

have an appreciation for the many organizations and service groups in the community and county. Sheriff Golden embraced the idea and put into motion the steps necessary to create the opportunity for participation. Interim Monmouth County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Lester Richens sent letters to the schools about the opportunity for participation throughout Monmouth County, and the Monmouth Council, Boy Scouts of America.

The four students who participated in the Community and County Awareness Program, and visited the three Constitutional offices all interviewed Executive Undersheriff Ted Freeman at the Police Academy, a division of the Sheriff's Office. Freeman noted that most of the parents who attended the interview with their children indicated that they were amazed at what THEY had learned about their community and county by being with their child during the visits and assisting with the report.

Astronaut John Glenn said, "By its very definition, civic responsibility means taking a healthy role in the life of one's community. That means that classroom lessons should be complemented by work outside the classroom. Service-learning does just that, tying community service to academic learning." The Monmouth County Sheriff's Office Community and County Awareness Program provides the opportunity to do so.