

Board of Governors for Higher Education  
Department of Higher Education  
State of Connecticut



## **Community Service Awards Honor 9/11 Volunteer, UConn Law School, Trinity Professor and Others**

HARTFORD, April 22 — Higher Education Commissioner Valerie F. Lewis will present the 2002 Higher Education Community Service Awards to several Connecticut college students, faculty and campus groups at a **4:00 pm. ceremony on Tuesday, April 23** in the Old Judiciary Room at the State Capitol. Among those expected to participate are State Representative William R. Dyson and Lisa Perrone, District Aide for U.S. Rep. John B. Larson.

The annual ceremony is sponsored by the Connecticut Department of Higher Education's Community Service Network which promotes and coordinates volunteer activities by college students, and the Connecticut Commission on National and Community Service, chaired by Representative Dyson.

Colleges make nominations for the three award categories of students, student groups and special awards. Three awards are made in each category for a total of nine honors.

This year's *student winners* are Albert Ferri of **Northwestern Connecticut Community College**, Keri Nastri of **Sacred Heart University** and Emily McDonald of **Connecticut College**.

In the *student group* category, winners are the Alpha Sigma Psi Fraternity of **Sacred Heart University**, the **Fairfield University** Community Service Council and the Connecticut Unemployment Action Center of the **University of Connecticut School of Law**.

Recipients are selected based on their ability to create projects which distinctly help individuals, community groups or environmental causes; utilize originality and unique approaches to community service; substantially increase student participation; and promote diversity and address urban problems.

The *Special Awards* category recognizes college faculty and staff, non-profit agencies and others considered leaders in community service by their personal contributions and institutional commitment. Those honored in this category are Angeles Dam of **Norwalk Community College**, Judith Primavera of **Fairfield University** and John Pfeil of **Trinity College**.

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*Brief descriptions of each winner are attached.*

## **2002 Higher Education Community Service Awards** *Student Winners*

**Albert Ferri**, a freshman at **Northwestern Connecticut Community College**, is an American Red Cross-National Disaster Volunteer who managed Respite Center #1, the main shelter at New York City's Ground Zero following the September 11th World Trade Center attacks. He supervised volunteers who provided 3,600 hot meals daily to relief workers. Mr. Ferri was in charge of ordering food and supplies, staffing the kitchen and supply areas, and managing logistics.

**Keri Nastri**, a junior at **Sacred Heart University**, mentors underachieving Bridgeport 6<sup>th</sup> graders through the Academic Mentoring Program. She also volunteers for Sunshine Kids, a mentoring program for children who have a parent or guardian infected with AIDS/HIV, and worked as an AmeriCorps Summer VISTA volunteer.

**Emily McDonald**, senior at **Connecticut College** created the College's chapter of Democracy Matters which seeks to involve young people in public policy-making. Ms. McDonald advocates on behalf of various issues including poverty, hunger, education, gender equity, health, campaign reform and the environment.

### *Student Group Winners*

**Alpha Sigma Psi fraternity** of **Sacred Heart University** which has its mission the improvement of "the domestic conditions of inner city Bridgeport through tackling issues such as poverty and child abuse." Alpha Sigma Psi performs more than 1,000 hours of community service every year. The Alpha Sigma Psi brothers volunteer at Bridgeport's "Sunshine Kids," the Merton House Soup Kitchen, Bridgeport Rescue Mission, Golden Hill Methodist Church and the Prospect House. This year the brothers created and organized "Child Advocacy Program Week" to bring speakers and events to campus to inform fellow students about housing, mental health, neglect and abuse issues.

The **Fairfield University Community Service Council** of **Fairfield University** — the heart of nine community service programs created and administered by the 20 Council student members. The Council has recruited 250 volunteers who perform more than 1,000 hours of community service, focusing on tutoring and mentoring Bridgeport youngsters. They also volunteer at local soup kitchens, day-care programs, and the Best Buddies program where students work with both mentally and physically disabled persons. The Council's other programs include MAACS, Bread and Roses, the Sunshine Kids and YMCE day care.

The **Connecticut Unemployment Action Center (CT-UAC)** of the **University of Connecticut School of Law**, a student-led organization dedicated to representing claimants seeking unemployment insurance benefits. To date, CT-UAC has represented some 50 clients and has an 85% success rate. CT-UAC's student volunteers research the law relevant to claims and prepare clients for administrative hearings.

### *Special Awards*

**Angeles Dam** of **Norwalk Community College**, faculty member, coordinator of the foreign language department and advisor to the Global Development Club which has a Sister City Project with Nagarote, Nicaragua. This project offers small loans to local citizens to improve their lives. Last summer, Ms. Dam led 10 high school students to Nagorte to help build a school playground and dining area for the World Food Bank.

**Judith Primavera** of **Fairfield University** who, in 1993, began a literacy project at ABCD Head Start in Bridgeport. Since then, she has annually recruited 250 students to tutor preschoolers, and provide literacy education and parental support. Last year, she introduced a Literacy Technology Training Center to acquaint pre-schoolers with computers.

**John (Fred) Pfeil** of **Trinity College**, an English professor who serves as a faculty advisor to VOID (Voices Organized in Democracy), and volunteer and board member of Cinestudio. Mr. Pfeil also coordinates and conducts nonviolent workshops at Connecticut prisons and at Hartford's Quirk Middle School. In addition, he is a volunteer and advisory board member of the Hartford Area Mediation Program and an active member in the Connecticut Network to Abolish the Death Penalty.