

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**NJ Recreation & Park Association Confers “Excellence in Programming”  
Award to Hanover Township’s Youth Public Safety Academy**

Hanover Township Recreation’s Youth Public Safety Academy was named the recipient of the “Daniel M. Gasalberti Excellence in Recreation Programming Award” by the New Jersey Recreation & Park Association (NJRPA). The purpose of the NJRPA’s Awards program is to recognize the state’s outstanding Recreation and Park agencies for excellence in programming. The Township will receive the award during the NJRPA annual convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on March 6th, 2018.

The Youth Public Safety Academy, developed and implemented by The Hanover Township Recreation Department in partnership with the Hanover Emergency Service Agencies, is a two-week training program held in the summer for boys and girls entering the 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> grade. This specialty camp academy introduces the participants to the roles and responsibilities of Hanover Townships’ career and volunteer Emergency Services Personnel.

Program instructors represented the Hanover Township Police Department, the Cedar Knolls Fire Department and First Aid Squad, the Whippany Fire Department, the Hanover Township Office of Emergency Management, and the Morris County Sheriff’s Office. In addition to the combined collaboration of departments within Hanover Township, sponsoring agencies such as the Hanover Township Local Police Benevolent Association (PBA) 128, the Hanover Township FMBA 109, Hanover Township business neighbor 3M, and the Hanover Township Substance Awareness Council lent support by helping to fund instructional materials, safety gear and glasses, and uniform accessories.

In this inaugural year of the Youth Public Safety Academy, 18 participants successfully completed the rigorous program which included classroom instruction, daily physical education drills, hands-on learning scenarios and field trips to venues such as the Hanover Township Police Department, the Morris County Public Safety Academy and the Morris County Correctional Facility. In addition, on-site visits included a helicopter landing by the New Jersey State Police and a visit by the Morris County Sheriff Office’s K-9 Corps, Bomb Squad, and Crime Scene Unit.

Members of the Youth Public Safety Academy worked alongside Emergency Services personnel at Hanover Township's Annual Patriotic Celebration with Fireworks. Some students had the opportunity to test their first aid skills by helping a young resident who had a minor medical emergency.

Memorial Junior School held an assembly for its students last May where the Youth Public Safety Academy instructors were introduced to the student body and gave an overview of how the branch of emergency services they worked closely with operated. An interesting fact that emerged from the assembly was that each of the instructors was a graduate of Memorial Junior School! This further engaged the student audience and enhanced the connection between the Youth Public Safety Academy and the future participants.

Hanover Township Recreation Superintendent Denise Brennan and Program Coordinator Tom Quirk will accept the award on behalf of the Recreation Department at the March 6th awards banquet. Brennan and Quirk are quick to underscore that all of the collaborators who worked to make this program such a success share in this recognition. In fact, one award-worthy, stand-out feature of the Youth Public Safety Academy is the broad scope of collaboration among several departments in Hanover Township. Superintendent Brennan and Program Coordinator Quirk met with the heads of the various emergency service departments to develop a comprehensive curriculum which would result in certifications for the participants at the conclusion of the Academy.

The Hanover Township Recreation Commission hosted the group's graduation and The Hanover Township Committee publicly recognized the participants during a regular meeting of the governing body.

Based on the success of the 2017 program, Hanover Township Recreation plans on offering the Youth Public Safety Academy as an on-going specialty camp in the summer of 2018 and beyond.

*The New Jersey Recreation and Park Association is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting parks and recreation, enhancing the professional development of its members, advocating sound policy and stewardship related to parks, recreation resource management and leisure services and increasing awareness of the value of play and preservation of the environment to interested citizens and the public.*

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