



Nov. 6, 2006

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**Northern and Central New Jersey Community Leaders Recognized by Bank of America  
through  
Third Annual Neighborhood Excellence Initiative™ Awards**

Bank Recognizes New Jersey Not-for-Profits, Individuals and Students with \$450,000 to Improve  
and Reshape Their Communities

Communities In Schools of New Jersey and Housing and Neighborhood Development Services to  
Receive \$200,000 Grants of Unrestricted Funds

**Newark, N.J.** – Bank of America today announced the 2006 recipients of its third annual *Neighborhood Excellence Initiative* (NEI) awards in northern and central New Jersey. These recipients include individuals and organizations dedicated to improving local communities.

The Bank of America *Neighborhood Excellence Initiative* commenced in 2004 to recognize, nurture and reward non-profit organizations, local heroes and student leaders helping to rebuild and revitalize their communities. In its first three years, Bank of America has committed over \$48 million to the national program which operates in 40 of the bank's major markets across the country. With the announcement of this year's award recipients, Bank of America has committed over \$1.3 million to date through the Neighborhood Excellence Initiative in northern and central New Jersey.

"The impetus behind the Neighborhood Excellence Initiative is to increase the impact of our giving by building partnerships with nonprofit organizations, recognizing distinguished volunteers and cultivating the next generation of community leaders," said Ann M. Limberg, President, Bank of America New Jersey. "Bank of America recognizes that each of these groups is essential to sustaining vital neighborhoods and, through this program, we strive to support each of these critical stakeholders and enable even greater community revitalization in northern and central New Jersey."

The Bank of America *Neighborhood Excellence Initiative* was developed to identify and then address local priorities for each individual community. "In New Jersey, the recipients have shown extraordinary leadership in addressing issues such as after-school programs and affordable housing that are critical to our community's future," added Limberg.

The Neighborhood Excellence Initiative provides essential support through three key programs:

**Neighborhood Builders™**: \$200,000 in grant funding and leadership training over the course of two years to two non-profit organizations working to promote vibrant neighborhoods. These grants are "unrestricted funds" and can be used by the organization to cover operating expenses and build program capacity. This year's Neighborhood Builders are:

- **Communities In Schools of New Jersey** is a organization that offers a long-term, comprehensive framework to help children succeed and stay in school by working with teachers, principals, parents, local service providers, businesses and institutions of higher learning to provide after-school programs, tutoring, mentoring, job internships and other services. Communities In Schools of New Jersey will be using its \$200,000 NEI grant to expand its two youth employment programs, YouthWORKS and Studioworks by strengthening its data collection, evaluation and resource development capacity.
- **Housing and Neighborhood Development Services, Inc. (HANDS)** works to revitalize neighborhoods in Orange and East Orange by developing vacant, troubled properties in the areas. Hands carries out its mission further by taking redeveloping properties in Orange and investing in first time homebuyers once those properties have been renovated. Hands will use its NEI grant to broaden its base of collaborators by adding a full-time community organizer and expand its fundraising capacity with the addition of a real estate development professional.

**Local Heroes™:** recognition of five community heroes whose achievements and leadership on local issues contributes significantly to neighborhood vitality. Recipients will direct a \$5,000 contribution to an eligible nonprofit of their choice. Local Heroes, along with their selected nonprofit organizations, are:

- **Diana Mejia** for her work on behalf of immigrant populations including assisting them with crucial turnkey services and working with them to obtain tax ID numbers. Mejia will direct her \$5,000 NEI grant to the Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center.
- **Carmela Lunt**, president of Community Hope, has worked tirelessly to create a supportive living environment for individuals recovering from serious mental illness. Lunt will donate her fund to Community Hope.
- **Fran Sculli**, a volunteer for over ten years, for her work creating a technology center at St. Rose of Lima Elementary School and integrating technology into the school's current curriculum. Sculli will be giving her NEI grant to New Community Corporation.
- **Amani Shakur**, a founding member of Street Warriors, has spread his message of pro-education and anti-violence by organizing ex-convicts to speak about their experiences during incarcerations to young adults. Shakur will direct his \$5,000 NEI grant to Street Warriors.
- **Jeanne Warnock** created Family Intervention Services, a South Orange-based nonprofit organization that provides a range of programs to families in crisis. Warnock will direct her grant to Family Intervention Services.

**Student Leaders™:** development of five exemplary high school students with an interest in improving their neighborhoods. To further their personal and educational growth, Bank of America provides funding for each student to participate in a paid, eight-week summer internship with a community-based organization as well as a series of leadership training and community service activities with Bank of America executives. The five Student Leaders this year are:

- **Sakinah Ahmad**, University High School, Newark
- **Chris Black**, Pingry School, Martinsville
- **Helen Herrera**, Morristown Beard School, Morristown
- **Matthew Renzulli**, Wayne Hills High School, Wayne
- **Susanna Van Order**, Morristown High School, Morristown

Award recipients were chosen by a local selection committee comprised of key members of northern New Jersey communities and chaired by Limberg. Committee members included:

- James Ballantine, Special Assistant, New Jersey State Department of Education
- Elizabeth Christopherson, Executive Director, New Jersey Network Public Television and Radio
- Patrick Kelly, SVP, Community Development Market Manager
- Abby O'Neill, SVP, Market Development Manager
- Nina Stack, Executive Director, Council of New Jersey Grantmakers
- Nina Mitchell Wells, Secretary of State, New Jersey

#### **Bank of America Corporate Philanthropy**

In 2005, the Bank of America Charitable Foundation embarked on an unprecedented \$1.5 billion philanthropic goal over the next 10 years. The bank has announced it will donate \$200 million in 2006, making Bank of America one of the most generous corporate donors in the country. The bank approaches giving through a national strategy called "neighborhood excellence" under which it works with local leaders to identify and meet the most pressing needs of communities. Through Team Bank of America, bank associate volunteers contribute more than 650,000 hours each year to improve the quality of life in their communities nationwide. For more information about Bank of America Corporate Philanthropy, please visit [www.bankofamerica.com/foundation](http://www.bankofamerica.com/foundation).

#### **Bank of America**

Bank of America is one of the world's largest financial institutions, serving individual consumers, small and middle market businesses and large corporations with a full range of banking, investing, asset management and other financial and risk-management products and services. The company provides unmatched convenience in the United States, serving more than 55 million consumer and small business relationships with more than 5,700 retail banking offices, nearly 17,000 ATMs and award-winning online banking with more than 20 million active users. Bank of America is the No. 1 overall Small Business Administration (SBA) lender in the United States and the No. 1 SBA lender to minority-owned small businesses. The company serves clients in 175 countries and has relationships with 98 percent of the U.S. Fortune 500 companies and 80 percent of the Global Fortune 500. Bank of America Corporation stock (NYSE: BAC) is listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

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