

# NEWS

## VOLUNTEER CENTER OF BERGEN COUNTY, INC.

64 Passaic Street Hackensack, NJ 07601 Phone: 201-489-9454 Fax: 201-489-1995  
[www.bergenvolunteers.org](http://www.bergenvolunteers.org)

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**For immediate release**

Contact: Eva Tobias x 121,  
Maureen McCormick x 126  
201-489-9454

December 14, 2009

End date: January 8, 2010

### **Wanted: Heroes for Kids**

North Jersey—One hundred boys and girls are looking for heroes.

These children have been referred to Volunteers in Protective Services (VIPS), a mentoring program sponsored by the Volunteer Center of Bergen County. For over 30 years, VIPS has screened, trained and supported caring men and women who are positive role models and dedicated mentors to Bergen County children who have experienced abuse, neglect and/or social isolation.

The next 6-week VIPS mentor training program begins on Wednesday, January 13, 2010. Each Wednesday session is held from 7:00 pm to 9:30 pm at the Volunteer Center of Bergen County, 64 Passaic Street in Hackensack.

“There are not nearly enough people enrolled thus far, says Faith Samples-Smart, VIPS Program Director. “There is an especially great need for men to mentor the boys, and for bi-lingual Spanish speaking mentors of both sexes.

“These 100 children are waiting for someone to step in and believe in them, to encourage them to laugh and succeed,” she continues. “We consider time spent with mentors as free time: free of the challenges that have been hard for them to confront in their daily environment. What a gift to have this respite and safe zone with a caring adult.”

The, 15-hour VIPS mentor training is provided at no charge and covers such topics as developing good listening and communication skills, working through challenges, understanding and recognizing the signs of abuse and neglect, the role of the

mentor and the matching process. Applicants are asked to supply references and undergo a fingerprint and background check.

For more information about the VIPS program, contact Eva Tobias at (201) 489-9454 Ext. 121, or visit [www.bergenvolunteers.org](http://www.bergenvolunteers.org) and click on mentoring programs.

Founded by the Junior League in 1966, the mission of the Volunteer Center of Bergen County is to strengthen the community by connecting people with opportunities to serve, operating direct service volunteer programs, building the capacity for effective volunteering and participating in strategic partnerships that meet community needs.

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