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INSTILLING STATE PRIDE IN STUDENTS:
49 STUDENT AUTHORS FROM OCEAN COUNTY HONORED BY
CELEBRATE NJ!

(Toms River, NJ) -- Creativity and hard work brought honors to dozens of fourth graders from Ocean County who participated in this year's Celebrate NJ! School Program.
(Editor's Note: See school list at end of release)

All of the students participated in an interactive online program in their classes, which resulted in their producing newspaper articles on a variety of topics ranging from famous New Jersey athletes and historic figures, to scientific inventions and NJ based businesses.

The children received awards at a ceremony held Friday (May 4, 2007) at the Ocean County Mall in Toms River. Brick Mayor Dan Kelly and Buster, the Lakewood Blue Claws' Mascot, were on hand to congratulate the students. This was the first of several programs for 2007 that will be held across the state to pay tribute to the program and participants. All of the Ocean County youngsters who were honored have been invited to a special Celebrate NJ! Game Night with the Lakewood BlueClaws at First Energy Park on May 31, 2007.

Fourth grade students in NJ are required to study state history in their Social Studies classes. More than 9,000 students throughout New Jersey participated in the program and were engaged in a learning process that took them into many subjects as they researched and wrote about what makes New Jersey the unique place it is.

Kyler Lopez, who attends the Crawford-Rodriguez Elementary School in Jackson made a board game with classmate Sean Nemeth, based on New Jersey's lighthouses. "I learned a lot about New Jersey lighthouses; I didn't even know there were eighteen of them."

Karen Hatcher, Executive Director of Celebrate NJ! said, "The program helps our children make an important connection to the place they call home. When we feel good about where we come from, we feel good about ourselves. We say that the program is about education, inspiration and celebration. These kids really inspired us tonight!"

The award recipients are from the following Ocean County schools: Howard C. Johnson Elementary, Crawford Rodriguez Elementary, Drum Point Road Elementary, Osbornville Elementary, Emma Havens Young, G. Harold Antrim Elementary, HM Potter Elementary, Midstreams School and Lanes Mill Elementary,

Celebrate NJ!, is a grassroots organization whose mission is to build pride and foster a bright future for the Garden State through educational programs and promotional campaigns. For full details and information on events, visit www.CelebrateNJ.org.

Photo caption: Kyler Lopez