

20 seniors honored at Jersey City ceremony

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Easter Seals New Jersey Senior Community Service Employment Program holds a Senior Appreciation Day Luncheon at the Bethune Center in Jersey City on Wednesday, June 10, 2015.

They might be considered senior citizens, but for a group of 20, it's no time to take it easy.

The group of senior citizens were honored yesterday during the 13th annual Senior Appreciation Day Luncheon as part of the Easter Seals' New Jersey Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), which provides training and job opportunities to seniors.

"You thought they'd be sitting under an elm tree drinking lemonade, but they're trying to get a job now," said New Jersey SCSEP Program Director Barbara Armstrong during the luncheon at the Mary McLeod Bethune Life Center on Martin Luther King Drive.

Armstrong noted that some of the participants are still caregivers in their own families and need to work.

Besides awarding 20 Senior of the Year of Awards to those who have been actively involved in the program, food was also provided and nutrition and health information booths were set up by organizations such as Jersey City Medical Center-Barnabas Health.

SCSEP has already served over 93 people in Hudson County this year despite only having 73 slots available, Armstrong said. SCSEP pays seniors a stipend of \$8.38 per hour for 20 hours a week while they receive training at one of the hundreds of nonprofit organizations that work with the program.

Supportive services are also offered to those in need, sometimes even paying for electricity bills or helping seniors find housing. Armstrong said.

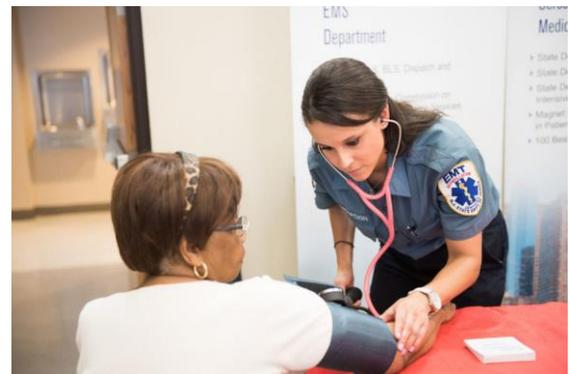
"When you reach a certain age you feel like society wants to throw you away," said Marcella Fitch, a 57-year-old Jersey City resident who is now doing data entry work with the help of SCSEP. "I'm disabled, but I'm still working. I feel like I'm still valuable."

The program also provides training for SORA, CDL, or cosmetology licenses. Seniors don't have to stick to a field that they know either, and SCSEP even provides computer training in some cases, Armstrong said.

Easter Seals is a nonprofit and through the SCSEP program, they've served over 1,000 people in Hudson County alone since the program first began in 2003, Armstrong said. The program also serves seniors in Union, Middlesex and Bergen counties.

The 20 recipients of the Senior of the Year Awards are:

1. John Belton
2. Stanley Bennett
3. Earl Brown
4. Luis Camacho
5. John Ciffarelli
6. Gregorio Codero
7. Addie Cousar
8. Larry Huntley (Resource Assistant)
9. Delia Martinez
10. Elizabeth Mohammed (Resource Assistant)
11. Cathy Morrison
12. Emilio Quiles
13. Mary Ann Riggins (Training Assistant)
14. Hilda De Maza-Rodrigues
15. Joseph Ryan
16. Margie Hill Smith
17. Salencia Thomas
18. Imogene Thompson (Resource Assistant)
19. Juanita Walker
20. Anthony Wells



Jersey City Medical Center-Barnabas Health EMT Dana Concepcion checks the blood pressure of Juanita Walker, 80, during the Easter Seals New Jersey Senior Community Service Employment Program's Senior Appreciation Day Luncheon at the Bethune Center in Jersey City on Wednesday, June 10,

SEE AWARD PHOTOS ON FOLLOWING PAGES



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents Stanley Bennett with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents John Belton with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents Gregorio Cordero with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents John Ciffarelli with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents Luis Camacho with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents Elizabeth Mohammed with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents Delia Martinez with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents Larry Huntley with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents Addie Cousar with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents Joseph Ryan with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents Mary Ann Riggins with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents Cathy Morrison with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents Salencia Thomas with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents Imogene Thompson with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents Margie Hill Smith with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents Anthony Wells with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents Juanita Walker with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents Nydia Ortiz with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, right, presents Earl Brown, Jr. with the Outstanding Senior of the Year Award



Resource Specialist Vera Holmes, left, and Program Director Barbara Armstrong, right, present Diana Nunez with Suits for Success a Host Agency Certificate of Appreciation



Standing in for Mayor Steve Flop, Deputy Mayor Marcos Vigil presents Resource Specialist Vera Holmes with a proclamation from the City of Jersey City during the Easter Seals New Jersey Senior Community Service Employment Program's Senior Appreciation Day Luncheon at the Bethune Center in Jersey City on Wednesday, June 10, 2015