



## 2011-12 Teachers Guide 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Program



## Welcome to the Celebrate NJ! 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Program!

*This overview is intended to provide answers to most of the questions that Teachers may have about the program. **If you have others, please contact us.***

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### Questions?

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## **Celebrate NJ! Vision**

### Vision

Celebrate NJ! seeks to inspire the minds and hearts of the people of New Jersey by educating, informing, and engaging them in a new conversation about our home state. With a focus on:

- the positive aspects of living, working and learning available in New Jersey;
- our rich history and the critical role we played in our nation's freedom;
- our cultural diversity as one of the most diverse states in the US;
- and the important discoveries and inventions birthed here,

Celebrate NJ! helps create an important connection to our significant past as we build a future of which we may feel proud.

## **School Program Objectives**

Program Purpose: The purpose of the Celebrate NJ! School Program is to educate, inspire and celebrate New Jersey's children.

### Intended results:

1. That students further develop literacy, research, writing, computer technology and public speaking skills as a result of their participation in the program.
2. That teachers (librarians, media specials, and school personnel) and students find the resources of the program to be a valuable addition to the classroom.
3. That parents are inspired by their child's involvement in the program.
4. That students begin to see themselves as future stewards of and leaders in their New Jersey communities.
5. That community members, organizations and businesses enthusiastically support New Jersey's children.
6. That teachers and students are fully acknowledged and celebrated for their involvement in the program.

## Content of the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade School Program



### ***A Writing Contest for Student Journalists!***

**Students Research and Write an article for the “New Jersey Scoop” Online newspaper**

The program features:

- Step by Step Instructions for Students
- Resources and Links to helpful web sites for research
- A Parents page with a list of Activities to Reinforce Learning
- Community Events to celebrate the students’ efforts
- Publication in Regional Newspapers showcasing the work of local students

The Celebrate NJ! School Program engages students in the activities of research, reading, and writing as they learn about many aspects of New Jersey history, people, places and events. They also improve computer skills through online research, word processing and keyboarding. As an added benefit, students may demonstrate their oral presentation skills both in the classroom and at awards events by sharing what they learned about New Jersey with other students, parents and community members.

The Celebrate NJ! School Program also fosters a connection to the rich, diverse place our kids call home. It helps develop self-esteem as they learn how people like them played important roles in the founding of our nation, invented life-changing products, and became global leaders. It inspires responsibility for their choices, as they take on the role of future stewards and leaders of our wonderful Garden State.

This program is independently funded and offered at no-fee to public and private schools alike. It was developed with and for New Jersey’s 4th grade teachers to meet the core curriculum standards. Launched in the spring of 2006, over 50,000 students have participated in the program since its inception.

## School Program Registration

### *Registration is Free and Easy!*

Register your students by using the online registration form found on [www.CelebrateNJ.org](http://www.CelebrateNJ.org), School Program page. That's all you need to do to get started.

The program resources are available online free for use at any time by all teachers and their students at [www.celebratenj.org](http://www.celebratenj.org). However, if you want your students to be eligible to participate in the writing contest and awards program that follows, you must complete the registration process.

Once you've registered we'll send out a classroom Welcome Kit.

## Teacher Communication and Support

Teachers are encouraged to send questions by email wherever possible to Karen Hatcher at [khatcher@celebratenj.org](mailto:khatcher@celebratenj.org). If the matter is more urgent, please call us at 732-333-0462.

**IMPORTANT!!** All regular correspondence will be sent to teachers via email, therefore it is important that the email address provided is one that is not protected by school firewalls, blocking devices, etc. Our registration form will ask for an alternate email address that we may use in the case of blocked email. Celebrate NJ! promises to restrict its use of email addresses to organizational communication only.

**Please Note:** We normally send out monthly updates to all registered teachers. **If you don't receive email from us, please contact us as a firewall may be blocking these important messages.**

## Classroom Activities

Teachers, often in collaboration with librarians or media specialists, oversee the activities of the program in their classrooms. We encourage teachers to fully use the resources provided in the program, however they and their students are not limited to these. We encourage students to use the school and local libraries to further their research.

**Teachers may determine that group or team projects work best with his/her students, or that instead of writing articles, they may want to conduct a class project on the study of New Jersey as part of the program.** Team or group articles and class projects may also be submitted for judging.

## Submission of Student Articles for Judging

A maximum number of six articles per registered class may be submitted by teachers online through the Celebrate NJ! website by the pre-determined deadline. Because it may be difficult for teachers to select the articles themselves, we suggest involving the students to vote on the best articles to send us. This helps all students to feel invested in the contest. The articles we receive will then be organized, sorted and made available for review to a group of volunteer judges. Instructions for submitting articles will be posted on the Teachers page of the website and emailed to all registered teachers.

## Judging and Selection of “Best of the Best” Articles

Please be sure to reinforce the following judging criteria with your students. Judges will review and evaluate their articles based on the following:

1. Articles must be typed *by your students* using a basic word processing software package, in an easy to read font such as Times New Roman or Arial. Font size should be no smaller than 12 font. The article must be at least 150 words but not longer than 250 words, and all spelling and punctuation must be proof-read and corrected prior to submission.  
**Please note: To be sure judges can open the files, please save all files as .doc or .txt.**
2. The topic chosen should fit the assignment detailed on the Assignment pages.
3. Writers should attempt to both educate and generate interest among their readers. They should include information that teaches the reader something not commonly known about the topic.
4. Writers may offer personal observations or experiences related to learning about the topic. They should also tell the reader why this particular topic is important to the study of New Jersey.
5. One photo, picture or drawing **may be attached to the article document** through our online submission form.
6. Articles will be disqualified for [plagiarism](#). Students should not “cut and paste” directly from online sources, but reformulate the information into their own words.

## Production of an Online Newspaper

An online newspaper creates a way for all of the selected articles to be viewed by the students, parents and community members. We expect to have the selected articles posted to the “New Jersey Scoop” during the month of May. Announcement of publication will come to teachers by email. We ask that you please alert parents when this occurs. To view the 2011 version, go to [www.njscoop.com](http://www.njscoop.com).

## **Student Articles Submitted to Local Newspapers for Publication**

The possibility of seeing their work in local newspapers provides a great incentive to students as they participate in the program. Most newspaper outlets accept the articles by electronic mail and media lists of weekly and daily newspaper contacts are available. We will send the winning articles out to our contacts however ultimately it is up to the editors of these papers if and when they will actually publish them. **Teachers and parents can support this effort by contacting their local papers to ask that they participate.**

## **Award Ceremonies and Celebration Events**

Publicly celebrating those students whose work was selected is an important and rewarding aspect of the program. Not only are students honored for academic achievement, they are also given an opportunity to demonstrate presentation and public speaking skills before hundreds of people in a public venue. We plan to continue this aspect of the program again this year. Dates and locations to be announced.

## **Consider Submitting a Class Project instead or in Addition**

Class Projects are great ways to engage all of your students where you might not have time or resources to manage the writing program. All students who participate this way also earn a ticket to the ball game.

## **Program Timeline**

Judging, publication and events will all follow during the spring as outlined below:

Online Registration begins	Monday, October 3, 2011
Online Registration ends	Friday, December 30, 2011
Student Article Submission begins	Monday, January 9, 2012
Student Article Submission ends	Friday, March 2, 2012
Article Judging Period ends	Friday, March 23, 2012
Class Project Submission ends	Friday, March 30, 2012
Article Selections Announced	Monday, April 2, 2012
Regional Awards Celebration Events	May/June 2012
Production of Online Newspaper	June 2012

## How to Get Started

1. Once you've reviewed the Assignments and Resources on the website and determined that the deadlines fit within your teaching plan...
2. Register your students using the link provided on the Teachers Page of the School Program section of [www.CelebrateNJ.com](http://www.CelebrateNJ.com).
3. Guide your students through the selection of topics, dividing them up among the six editorial areas of study.
4. Point them to the Student Resources page and let the research begin! (These resources are meant to help them get started—they aren't meant to be the only research tools they use.)
5. You should receive your classroom Welcome Kit before January. (Please do not wait to receive the kit before doing steps 1-4.)

A whole host of teaching ideas, as well as a list of teachers who can help you get started in the program, are available on the Teacher Resources page: <http://cnjschoolprogram.wordpress.com/teacher-resources/>

*Look for your monthly teacher update by email. If you don't hear from us, please reach out to us ([khatcher@celebratenj.org](mailto:khatcher@celebratenj.org)). We may have run into your school firewall!*

Enjoy the Program!



To read the 2011 Edition, go to [www.njscoop.com](http://www.njscoop.com).