



THE JUNIOR STATE OF AMERICA

A non-partisan, educational organization of high school students founded in 1934 as The Junior Statesmen of America

**HEADQUARTERS: 800 S CLAREMONT ST SUITE 202 SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA 94402
(800) 334-5353 (650) 347-1600 FAX (650) 347-7200 WWW.JSA.ORG**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
June 4, 2010**

**Contact: Jeff Harris, Executive Director
(800) 334-5353**

Watchung Hills Regional High JSA Chapter wins National Civic Impact Award

A group of New Jersey high school students who last school year focused on projects ranging from a school political fair to a community garden have won the National Civic Impact Award of The Junior State of America, the nationwide high school political science and civic awareness organization has said.

The JSA chapter at Watchung Hills Regional High School of Warren, N.J., has won the 2009-2010 National Civic Impact Award, which recognizes the JSA chapter that has had the biggest impact on increasing the level of civic awareness and engagement at their school.

The Watchung Hills Regional chapter was chosen from among the finalists, all of which had won the "Chapter of the Year Award" in their area of the country. Watchung Hills finished first in the balloting after the chapters made presentations to a panel of judges consisting of trustees of The Junior Statesmen Foundation, who also reviewed essays submitted by the finalists.

"We live, eat and breathe JSA at Watchung Hills," said Chapter President Kate Freeman. The award, Freeman said, is "a credit to all of our chapter officers and our members who worked so hard over the year. ... We really took JSA outside of just the chapter and to the rest of the school and into the community."

The chapter held a political fair at their school, hosted a successful chapter conference, ran a school-wide mock election of the New Jersey governor's race, participated in a meeting of their school district's board of education and launched several community service projects including starting a community garden — all while participating in JSA conventions and conferences throughout the year. As one of the judges said of the Watchung Hills entry, "Their school activities were varied and their chapter conference showed creativity. ... I believe they have renewed [the chapter's] importance in their school community."

Honorable mention in the civic impact award goes to the JSA chapter at The Buckley School of Sherman Oaks, Calif., which placed second, and the chapter at IDEA College Preparatory of Donna, Texas, which came in third. The other finalists were Alfred M. Barbe High of Lake Charles, La.; Clarkstown South High of West Nyak, N.Y.; Holy Names Academy of Seattle; Northgate High of Walnut Creek, Calif., and Union Local High of Belmont, Ohio.

----- MORE ----- MORE ----- MORE ----- MORE ----- MORE -----

**WASHINGTON DC OFFICE: 1600 K ST NW SUITE 803 WASHINGTON, DC 20006
(800) 317-9338 (202) 296-7838 FAX (202) 296-7839 WWW.JSA.ORG**

In winning the award, the JSA chapter at Watchung Hills Regional will receive a \$2,000 grant in order to continue its civic engagement programs in the upcoming year, a \$500 stipend reward to the chapter's teacher/advisor, Erin Hodge, and a plaque that can be displayed in the school's award case.

ABOUT JSA

The largest high school student-run organization in the country, the non-partisan Junior State of America has chapters in more than 450 high schools and in 2010 had over 10,500 dues-paying members. In addition to hosting high school campus-based political talks and debates, the group elects regional leaders, is self-governing and holds statewide political awareness and debate conventions three times per year. JSA also hosts adult community leaders who speak to the students on relevant topics and take student questions. The program, founded in 1934, is supported by The Junior Statesmen Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational corporation. The foundation also sponsors a variety of summer programs, including four-week summer schools held at college campuses nationwide, and a series of week-long summer institutes that provide high school students with college-level learning opportunities. The foundation has paid staff in offices in San Mateo, Calif., and Washington, D.C.

<http://www.jsa.org/> jsa@jsa.org (800) 334-5353