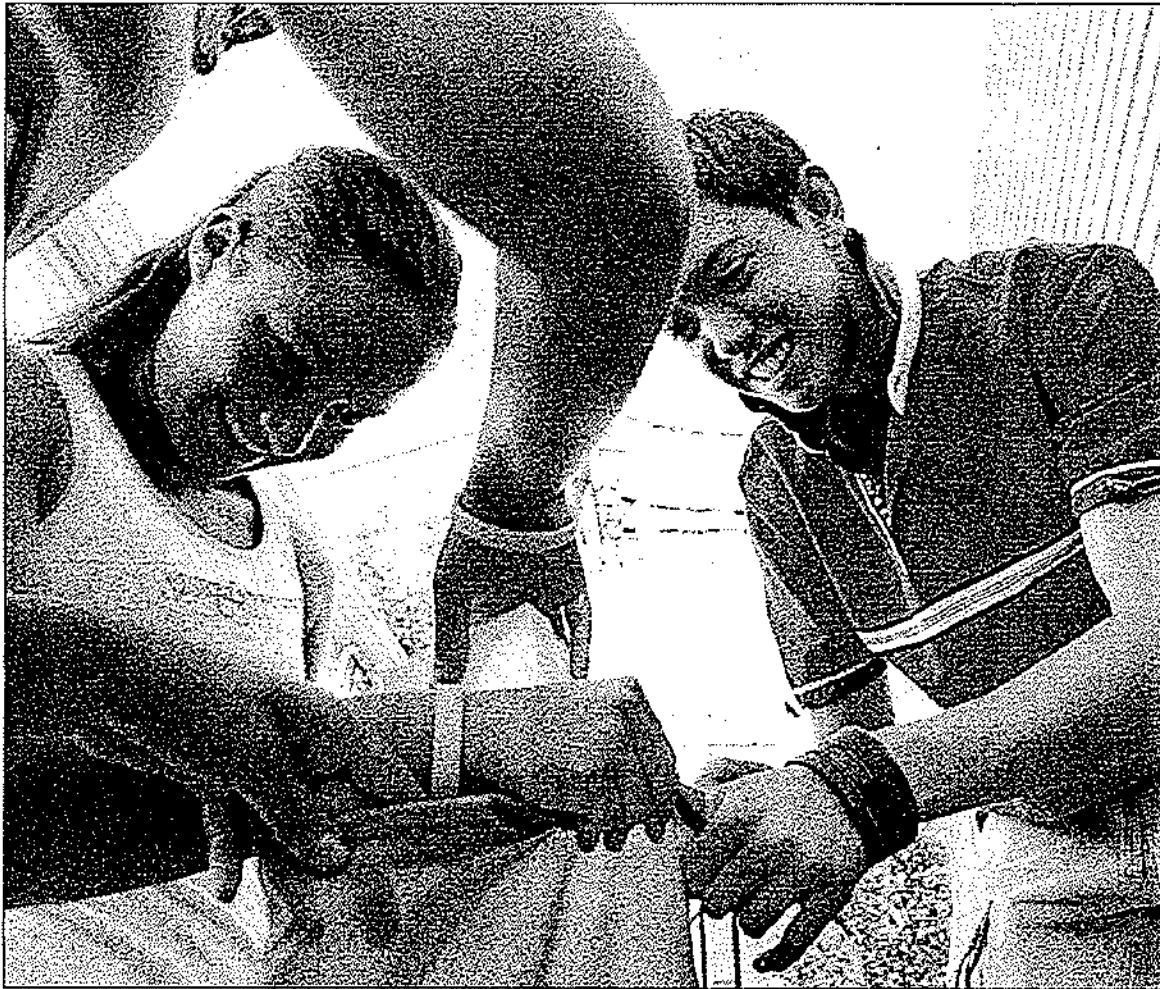


HOPE AND HELP



ALDO MARTINEZ JR. JOURNAL PHOTO

SECAUCUS HIGH STUDENT Kevin Williams, right, places bars of soap into bags with help from Rachel Kantor, center, and Melissa Farber.



TOM DeGISE

Exec to pay workers who volunteer

BY RONALD LEIR
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Hudson County employees who volunteer their time for charitable organizations in support of Hurricane Katrina relief will be guaranteed paid leave up to 15 days under an executive order signed yesterday by Hudson County Executive Tom DeGise.

Executive Order 11 says "County of Hudson employees who are recognized volunteers in bona fide charities, and volunteer for services with such charity within the disaster zones created by Hurricane Katrina, shall be entitled paid leave of absence from county employment for a period not to exceed 15 work days while on such volunteer duty or traveling to and from the affected areas."

The order says workers granted the leave will be treated with "a record of uniform service with full seniority and full benefits in place they won't be covered under county's workers' compensation plan.

The order says employees seeking the paid leave must first receive a letter from the charity for whom they are working.

The letter must identify the charity as a nonprofit organization, document that the employee has been asked to provide assistance in the disaster, list the work to be done, how long it will take, and when the employee will return to his or her job, the order says.

Teen with gift for giving is packing aid supplies

By ROXANNE DE VILLAVA
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Fifteen-year-old Kevin Williams of Secaucus is organizing his own relief effort for Katrina victims.

Every day until Sept. 18 he and members of two community organizations that he founded will collect and pack supplies, then donate them at the drop-off center at Newark Airport and to the Jersey City Salvation Army on Erie Street.

"The supplies will be airlifted and distributed to the families all across the state (Louisiana)," he said.

This act of kindness is one of many for Williams, who began his commitment to public

GETTING INVOLVED

- Donations may be sent to Wrap4Asmile Foundation Inc. and PTFI - GIFT at 773 Eighth St., Secaucus, NJ 07094.
- To get involved with Wrap4Asmile or PTFI - GIFT, visit www.wrap4asmile.org/index2.htm or <http://gointernationalistomorrow.org/>

service at the age of 13, after he was sent to Europe as a People to People International student ambassador.

The trip inspired him to create Go International, For Tomorrow (GIFT) — a student chapter of PTFI — with 10 of his friends. GIFT is a student-run, nonprofit organization dedicated to community service.

GIFT completed more than 8,500 hours of community service its first year. Part of that service was completed at the Secaucus Department of Social Services.

While volunteering at the department, Williams realized that some items, such as soap and shampoo, couldn't be bought with food stamps. So, Williams created Wrap4Asmile in January to collect and wrap bags of those supplies for the needy.

Social Services Director Karyn Urnowski praised Williams' enthusiasm and generosity.

"He's the best," she said. "He's so resourceful and it amazes me."



ALDO MARTINEZ JR. JOURNAL PHOTO

KEVIN WILLIAMS carries another box of supplies from his house.