

**Youth Philanthropy Award**  
***significant, comprehensive philanthropic achievements***  
**MELISSA CHRISTIE & FRANCESCA CINTORRINO**

Both Melissa Christie and Francesca Cintorrino are very involved with community service. As a second-year communicative disorders major, Melissa was the Community Service Chair for the Honor's Student Association. She planned and participated in volunteer projects, such as Aid to South Africa, Adopt-A-Block, the West Chester Senior Center, Good Cause Café which supports Family Services of Chester County's Project One, and AIDs Walk Philly.

Fran is currently a senior psychology major with a passion for serving the community. Fran is the past President of the Abbes Society, which is a women's organization for WCU students who love to volunteer. Under Fran's leadership the organization performed almost 2,300 hours of service this year. A few of the places Fran volunteered with regularly include The Hickman, the West Chester Senior Center, and Home of the Sparrow.

Melissa Christie & Francesca Cintorrino are both hard working and dedicated students of West Chester University. Through their strong passion for community service, they have provided much relief to the New York area after the devastation of Hurricane Sandy.

These two dedicated West Chester University students took the initiative to plan and facilitate an Alternative Spring Break Trip to Staten Island, New York to help rebuild after hurricane Sandy. The Alternative Spring Break program was on a ten year hiatus and they successfully brought the program back to life. They recruited 18 other students to embark on a journey to help families dealing with the devastation left behind from the storm. As the Co-Trip Leaders they planned all of the logistics, from housing to transportation to service projects. The trip was a service-learning program; which

strives to not only meet the direct need in the community but also encourages lifelong active citizenship

Melissa and Fran contacted The Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation and Guyon Rescue to help them install insulation and drywall in the home of an elderly woman who'd lost her husband only a few weeks before Sandy hit. They stocked shelves at a food pantry and processed intake forms. They removed trash and debris, and were saddened at the personal nature of ruined items such as photo albums.

"We ended our week together realizing we were a family, striving to change at least a small piece of the world", says co-leader of the trip Melissa Christie

"One of the full time volunteers there gave myself and Melissa Christie a big hug and told us that we were some of the best student volunteers she has ever worked with. At that point, I was the most proud I've ever been to be a student – and soon a graduate – of West Chester University," said co-leader Fran Cintorrino.

Because of Melissa's and Fran's hard work and dedication to Alternative Spring Break Trips the program is thriving and even growing! Next year our group will assist other clubs and organizations and faculty members who are interested in hosting Alternative Spring Breaks. The non-profit agencies that we worked with in Staten Island have also continued to stay in touch with us. Melissa and Fran also modeled terrific leadership on the trip and in our pre-departure meetings. The newly selected Trip Leaders will look to them for insight, direction, and assistance as the program continues to grow.