



L TO R: John Soares, Officer Luz Rodriguez, Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., Steven Perez, and Dr. Michael Festa.

## ESSEX COUNTY EXECUTIVE DIVINCENZO RECOGNIZES EMPLOYEES & STUDENT DURING COUNTY'S APRIL TEAMWORK AWARD PROGRAM

**Newark, NJ** – Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. presented the monthly Essex County Teamwork Awards to three Essex County employees, and one student from the Essex County Vocational School District. The following individuals were commended for their dedication and commitment to serving the public.

**Steven Perez** is an eleventh-grade, Honor Roll student in the Law and Public Safety Academy at the Essex County Vocational School District's North 13<sup>th</sup> Street Campus. Perez, a well-rounded student, is a member of the school's Mock Trial Team, and works diligently on many student-centered programs for his alma mater, the First Avenue School in Newark. He also promotes the Law and Public Safety Academy at the Essex County Vocational-Technical School District-Wide School Fair. His humanitarian nature is evident, as he often helps his peers with their academics and personal development, and is always lending a hand to support teachers and administrators within the North 13<sup>th</sup> Street Vo-Tech community. Steven is dedicated to the pursuit of his dream to serve his country in the United States Air Force and become a New Jersey State Trooper Pilot. He currently volunteers as a Cadet Commander and Cadet Master Sergeant with the Civil Air Patrol.

**Dr. Michael Festa** is the Essex County Health Officer in the Department of Health & Rehabilitation, Division of Community Health Services. Dr. Festa implemented the County Environmental Health Administration Program (CEHD), the Environmental Fund (EQEF) and the Environmental Court (with the Office of the County Counsel) for the deposit of fines collected from solid and hazardous waste enforcement activities. He is responsible for infectious disease control at Essex County's Hospital Center, Correctional Facility and Youth Detention Center, grant proposals, training programs, procedures and monthly in-service meetings. In addition, he serves as the Health Officer for the Township of South Orange Village, is an adjunct professor at Kean University, and an Instructor/Trainer for the Essex County Police Academy, Turning Point and the American Red Cross.

**John Soares** joined the Essex County Department of Economic Development, Training & Employment, Division of Housing & Community Development one year ago as the Financial Coordinator. Soares is an integral part of the operations in the Division. In a short period of time, he has synchronized the Federal grants accounting system (IDIS), the County's accounting system (HTE), and the Division's internal accounting system for the first time. In addition to his duties as a Financial Coordinator, he is an active Board Member of the Ironbound Soccer Club, the largest urban soccer program in New Jersey, The Salvation Army's Ironbound Boys & Girls Club, Northern Counties Soccer Association and the Friends of Riverbank Park.

**Officer Luz Rodriguez** began her career with the Essex County Sheriff's Office ten years ago. Officer Rodriguez guards the main entry points to the Hall of Records, ensuring the safety of those who enter the building. She recently detected a multi-purpose tool that included a knife, buried deep in a large knapsack that had escaped detection at both the Las Vegas and Philadelphia Airports. Although she displays a quiet demeanor, Officer Rodriguez is extremely conscientious about the safety of employees and visitors to the Hall of Records.