

NEWS



Edward A. Diana
Orange County Executive

July 20, 2011

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Orange County Human Rights Commission Awards 2011 Scholarship *Minisink Valley HS Senior Ortiz Recipient*

GOSHEN - Orange County Executive Edward A. Diana presented Rebekah Ortiz, a resident of Westtown, with the 2011 Orange County Human Rights Commission's annual scholarship. The scholarship, a \$500 cash prize, recognizes Ortiz for her efforts to further human rights awareness and cultural acceptance on a local and national level.

Ortiz, a 2011 Minisink Valley High School graduate, was an active participant in her school's activities, serving as President of the Student Council and the Key Club her senior year, as well as Director of Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) for her last two years. She is also involved with many nation-wide environmental groups, spending time lobbying and advocating in Washington, D.C.

"Rebekah, through her countless academic, volunteer, and extracurricular activities, exemplifies the goals and mission of the Human Rights Commission to promote respect and understanding throughout the community," said County Executive Diana. "As an educator for more than 30 years, I've witnessed many students with Rebekah's passion continue on to change society," continued Diana. "I wish her further success."

An accomplished student, Ortiz was also the recipient of a Susan B. Anthony and Fredrick Douglass Award for outstanding high school juniors in leadership and academics, the Zonta International Young Women in Public Affairs Award, and two Sojourner Truth Awards for Citizenship, among many others.

"On behalf of the Human Rights Commission, it's my honor to present Rebekah with the 2011 scholarship," said Kathleen Francese, vice chair of the Human Rights Commission and Scholarship committee chair. "She volunteers countless hours to advance the causes she is passionate about. We believe that she is a role model to the community and are proud to award her this scholarship."

Ortiz is planning to study civil environmental infrastructure engineering, starting her

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undergraduate career at Northern Virginia Community College. Afterward, she hopes to continue working as a human rights activist in Washington, D.C.

In addition to her innumerable volunteer and extracurricular achievements, Ortiz is an active participant in many of her church activities.

The Orange County Human Rights Commission has been presenting the scholarship since 2006. It is funded through proceeds from the Commission's annual dinner held each April. The dinner recognizes community members who support human rights efforts in Orange County. To learn more about the Orange County Human Rights Commission, call (845) 615-3680 or visit www.orangecountygov.com, click on Departments, then Human Rights Commission.

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Orange County Executive Edward A. Diana presents the Human Rights Commission's 2011 scholarship to Minisink Valley High School senior Rebekah Ortiz at the Government Center. They're joined by County Clerk Donna Benson (far left) and HRC Vice Chari and Scholarship committee chair Kathleen Francese.