

Northeast Conference

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For Immediate Release

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Sacred Heart Wins Inaugural “NEC Building Communities Award”

Somerset, NJ -- As part of the Northeast Conference's effort to recognize the ongoing charitable and community service efforts of its member institutions, Sacred Heart was recently awarded the inaugural *NEC Building Communities Award*.

The award, which was conceived by the NEC Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), is designed to recognize the institution which demonstrates the highest dedication to making an impact in the community through the efforts of its student-athletes, coaches and administrators. Over the course of the 2010-11 academic year, Conference members logged over 25,000 hours of community service.

“The Northeast Conference is incredibly proud to announce Sacred Heart University as the inaugural recipient of the *NEC Building Communities Award*, which was presented to Dr. John Petillo at the June 8th NEC Council of Presidents meeting,” said Noreen Morris, NEC Commissioner. “The purpose of this award is to celebrate the commitment and dedication our student-athletes, coaches and administrators place on making an impact in their respective communities. We were well aware that our membership was extremely active in community service, and were thrilled to learn that the NEC volunteered over 25,000 hours of community service in the 2010-11 academic year. We look forward to continuing to make a difference in our communities as we move into year two of the *NEC Building Communities Award*.”

Sacred Heart itself donated 6,212 hours of community service, the majority of which took place through the “Dunbar School Initiative.” The Dunbar School is a K-8 school located on the east side of Bridgeport, CT. The Sacred Heart SAAC takes part in the M.O.T.I.V.A.T.E. project at Dunbar, which stands for Meaningful Opportunities To Inspire Vision and Achieving Total Excellence. The mission is to provide opportunities to Dunbar students through mentoring that will enhance their sense of pride, responsibility and worth. The SAAC arranged for athletic vans to be available every morning, driven by students, with 10-15 student-athletes visiting Dunbar each day to help assist in the classroom.

“The *NEC Building Communities Award* is a wonderful validation and recognition of Sacred Heart's student-athletes commitment to the external community, particularly those in our local urban center of Bridgeport where people are not as blessed nor as fortunate as we are,” said Don Cook, Sacred Heart Director of Athletics. “The award has given our student-athletes another reason to feel good about being caring, responsible members of the larger community in which they live. As important as intercollegiate sports participation is in their personal growth, greater is the impact its influence has had in providing a social platform of caring for and about others. While the outcome of games offers its teachable moments, many student-athletes understand even better how community service offers richer, more meaningful opportunities for personal growth. Every time our student-athletes stepped out of their comfort zone for someone less fortunate, it reminded them how lucky they are to be associated with the Northeast Conference, an entity that offers sports competition, but more so an opportunity to become bigger than they are through a total life experience richer than the sports they play.”

Robert Morris finished the year with 4,977 hours of service, the second highest total in the Conference. Saint Francis (PA) (3,174), Central Connecticut State (2,580), Fairleigh Dickinson (2,267) and Monmouth (2,079) all logged more than 2,000 hours on the year.

(Sacred Heart Wins Inaugural “NEC Building Communities Award” • Page 1-of-2)

Bryant University (2012-13) • Central Connecticut State University • Fairleigh Dickinson University
Long Island University • Monmouth University • Mount St. Mary's University • Quinnipiac University
Robert Morris University • Sacred Heart University • St. Francis (NY) College
Saint Francis (PA) University • Wagner College

About the Northeast Conference

Now celebrating its 30th anniversary season, the Northeast Conference is an NCAA Division I collegiate athletic association consisting of 12 institutions of higher learning located throughout six states. Media coverage of the NEC extends to four of the largest markets in the United States - New York (#1), Pittsburgh (#23), Baltimore (#26), and Hartford/New Haven (#30). Founded in 1981 as the basketball-only ECAC Metro Conference, the NEC has grown to sponsor 22 championship sports for men and women and now enjoys automatic or play-in access to 13 different NCAA Championships. NEC member institutions include Central Connecticut State, Fairleigh Dickinson, Long Island, Monmouth, Mount St. Mary's, Quinnipiac, Robert Morris, Sacred Heart, St. Francis (NY), Saint Francis (PA) and Wagner. Bryant will become the NEC's 12th member upon completion of the NCAA Division I reclassification process in 2012. For more information on the NEC, visit www.northeastconference.org.