



**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Amalia Duarte**  
**Public Affairs Director**  
ECLC of NJ  
Cell: (973-902-8390)  
E-mail: [aduarte@eclcofnj.org](mailto:aduarte@eclcofnj.org)

## **ECLC of New Jersey's Special Needs Students Collect Cozy Pajamas for Children in Need**

**CHATHAM, N.J.** – Pull out the pajamas at night and lots of children run in the other direction like they're being chased by a monster that's crawled out from under the bed. When homeless children are handed a new set of donated pjs, they might run, too, but for a completely different reason.

"When they see the pajamas, their eyes pop wide open, and they run off to the nearest private area to immediately change into them. It's heartbreaking," said Ann DeVico of Madison, who volunteers with the Pajama Program, a nationwide nonprofit that collects and distributes new pajamas and books to needy children.

This summer at ECLC of New Jersey's school for children with special needs in Chatham, the Key Club and Room 201 collected new pjs, books and cash donations to support this worthy cause. In total, through the generosity of parents and staff, they collected 113 books, 31 sets of pajamas and \$150 in cash.

Over the coming weeks, DeVico, with friend, Doris Newman of Florham Park, plan to take items to local churches, shelters and other programs serving the needy. They delight in the work and reaction of the youngsters. "We deliver!" said Newman. "We don't just bring boxes to the distribution center. We sort through everything, and, if we know in advance, try to match up the pajama sets with children for the right sizes."

The pair has been involved with the charity since another friend saw the cause featured on "Oprah" six years ago. They also volunteer at the program's reading room in Red Bank. "It's very rewarding," said Newman.

Teacher Gail Frey, who coordinated the drive, is already talking about holding another one in the winter, when it's colder and children will need heavier pajamas. "I would imagine that the need is even greater right now," she commented, and both ladies nodded in agreement.

### **What is ECLC?**

ECLC is an accredited, nonprofit, educating students ages 5-21 with severe learning and/or language disabilities, autism spectrum, Down syndrome or multiple disabilities at schools in Chatham and Ho-HO-Kus. Students attend ECLC when their local school district determines that an out-of-district placement is indicated.

When students are in their final year of school, a separate ECLC offshoot, Community Personnel Services, provides transition services to employment or another post-graduation opportunity, while ECLC's P.R.I.D.E. Centers in Chatham and Paramus provide adults with special needs with vocational training and independent living skills.

Learn more about ECLC at <http://www.eclcofnj.org>.