



April 2025

VOL 4

The Joy of Saying, "YES!"

As my president's year draws to a close, I reflect on the joy of saying, "YES!" to P.E.O. Five years ago, I said, "yes" to joining the New Jersey State Chapter Board as Secretary. You may notice my, "yes" of five years ago was written in lowercase letters and with no exclamation point. I was a little unsure of what I was getting into. My Chapter AB sisters said this was a great opportunity and my father said it would be a great experience- so I said, "yes."

Entering the Executive Board, I was passionate about the P.E.O. mission, the projects and the devotion of New Jersey sisters I met in state leadership roles. The years on the board not only heightened my understanding of our sisterhood's history, procedures and policy but also allowed me be part of a team of intelligent, dedicated, thoughtful, caring and funny women who advance of the work of P.E.O. Some of these women were my fellow state board members, committee members and Past State Presidents. Others I met while representing the New Jersey State Chapter at Cottey Seminar in Nevada, MO, LEAD Conference in Des Moines, IA, and Convention of International Chapter in Pittsburgh, PA.

As state president, I have had the pleasure of reading news written by our state sisters for the Marguerite Messenger Link, annual President's Letters and Annual Reports in preparation for the state convention. Your writings show the many unique ways in which P.E.O. bridges fun, friendship and philanthropy in New Jersey. Never have I ever been more proud of what a group of women have accomplished for P.E.O. in our great state of New Jersey.

Five years ago I said, "yes" to joining the State Executive Board. Today, with all that I have learned and experienced, I encourage each of you, when asked, "Will you please join the state leadership team?" to say, "YES!" (with capital letters and an exclamation point) to every P.E.O. opportunity - you will expand your knowledge, be surrounded by loving sisters and feel joy.

Anne Meyer

Updated Contact Information

Wendy Baker, PSP, AL has a new email which is: JBWBLB18@gmail.com

Membership

Do you remember the first time you met your sister-in-law? Or the first time you became a sister or sister-in-law? Joining a new family can be a challenging experience, but it also can be a wonderful one.

Inviting a woman to become your sister in P.E.O. is like inviting someone to join your family. Sometimes the comfort level is instantaneous. Sometimes it can take a while to get used to each other. A growing relationship takes time. You have to do things together – fun things and work things – to allow the relationship to grow. Strive to keep your P.E.O. sisters engaged in the life of your chapter whether that is in person or digitally. After all, don't many of you stay engaged in the lives of your grandchildren via the telephone and FaceTime? It is no different with your P.E.O. family. Take the time to call, send a chapter newsletter, or Facetime.

Relationships also require openness and a common understanding of how you relate to one another. Take the time to talk to your P.E.O. sisters about what P.E.O. means to you. Check up on your P.E.O. knowledge. Are there any old P.E.O. myths that you need to dispel? Myths such as "P.E.O. is a secret" or "No non-P.E.O.s at Reciprocity." Myths like these can be off-putting to potential or new sisters.

Relationships require understanding. Not every sister is going to approach P.E.O. matters the way that you do, but we all have a common bond in our P.E.O. vows, our Objects and Aims, and our Constitution. As we grow in our knowledge of their meaning and structure, we will grow in Sisterhood with each other.

It is the Sisterhood nature of P.E.O. that sets us apart from other women's clubs and organizations. We are more than friends and colleagues. We are family! Let's share the joy of this familial life with our own personal families and with our communities. There is always room for one more at the P.E.O. table.

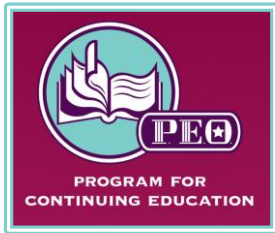




Did You Know...

- In celebration of the 60th anniversary of the New Jersey State Chapter in 2002, the **New Jersey State Chapter Anniversary Scholarship** (an endowed fund held at Cottey) was established. Cottey provides NJ annual financial reports on its endowed fund.
- The Cottey College Board of Trustees determines investment policies and procedures and employs professional money managers to invest funds within investment guidelines. Their goal is to meet or exceed an absolute annual rate of return of 7.93% over a 7-year investment horizon. 4.5% net of fees is withdrawn annually to award as scholarships to students attending Cottey College.
- The fund balance on 6/30/24 was **\$21,342.02** (with the historic principal dollar value of **\$10,000**) – included accumulated net income for the fiscal year of \$2,857.02 (That's great stewardship!)
- **\$987.14** was distributed for 2024 and the recipient said it made her happy to know that there are other women in the world that support her, and the scholarship helped to be the determining factor of her choosing Cottey.
- The '24 graduate, a 4-year student from Staten Island, NY, also stated her greatest experience at Cottey was learning how all the diverse people there from all different parts of the world were actively trying to pursue a career just like her! She said they all got together, bonded over it, and made lifelong friends.





Program for Continuing Education

Meet Zamira Rahman, PCE Recipient

Last July, Zamira Rahman was awarded a \$4,000 PCE grant to support her education at Raritan Valley Community College. Since receiving the grant, Zamira has made significant strides in her academic and professional pursuits. She will complete her Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Counseling in December 2025--a milestone of which she is incredibly proud. In addition, she has participated in an internship program with the Dept. of Children and Families in their IT department, an experience that will open additional potential career pathways. In recognition of the growing importance of technology, Zamira has also enrolled in a Certified Medical Assistant and Billing and Coding Certification Program, which will enhance her understanding of patient care as well as the business side of healthcare.

While excited about the progress that she has made, Zamira admits that it has not been without its challenges. Childcare has been a major obstacle because she has a three-year old special needs child and two other school-age children. She finds that balancing school, work, and family responsibilities has been difficult. But through it all, she remains optimistic and grateful to God for giving her the strength and clarity to navigate these challenges.

Zamira writes, "None of this would be possible without the support of P.E.O. Your belief in me has opened the door to realizing that my dreams are achievable, no matter the obstacles. While the path hasn't been easy, I know it is worth it. It reminds me of the power of community --we as individuals can uplift and transform each other when we come together. I am beyond thankful for your assistance, and I look forward to the future with hope and determination."

Kathy Finnerty Laura Newton

NJ State PCE Committee

New Jersey Sisters – Beware of SCAMS

NO ONE on the State Executive Board will ever contact you to request money, Venmo, credit cards, transfer of funds or gift cards.



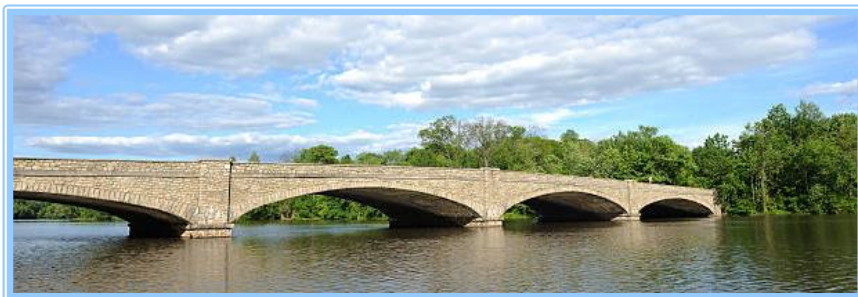
REPORT from IPS Committee

As of March 20, 2025, total IPS donations in New Jersey P.E.O. chapters, was \$11,908.50. As of April 2024, the IPS Board of Trustees awarded \$2,255,750 to 205 recipients from 56 different countries. During the 2024-2025 academic year, these extraordinary women will be studying toward graduate degrees at 92 different universities in 33 states and 3 Canadian provinces. "Supporting women's education has a ripple effect, positively impacting their lives and the world around us. The P.E.O. International Peace Scholarship Fund plays a vital role in empowering women and fostering peace around the world through education." (NJPEO website)

There are many ways that chapters reached out to their PIPs. Some chapters sent cards, gift baskets, care packages, emails, zoom calls and phone calls. Some chapters kept in touch with PIPs from the past and have developed long standing, caring relationships with them. One chapter planned an outing with their PIP to the Sculpture Garden in NJ. Some chapters in NJ and NY recently participated in a group Zoom meeting to meet their PIPs. This was an inspiring and wonderful get together to meet these incredible young women.

In 2024-2025, 18 New Jersey chapters had 12 Partners in Peace. One PIP in NJ has 5 chapters supporting her and one PIP has 4 chapters supporting her. Chapter AV has 2 PIPs. Eight PIP scholars are attending Columbia University, and two PIPs are attending colleges in NJ. The countries that the PIP's are from include New Zealand, United Kingdom, Thailand, Costa Rica, Peru, Colombia, India, Argentina, Chile, and Mexico.

Please remember that it is very important to protect the safety of our recipients while they are studying in our countries. For security reasons, we ask that you DO NOT put any contact information, such as addresses, emails, photos or phone numbers on your website or Facebook pages.





New Jersey Scholar Awards

We were busy this year Building Fun, Friendship and Philanthropy in our state while meeting and nominating our Scholar Award Candidates! Nine New Jersey Chapters nominated a total of 10 candidates for Scholar Awards for consideration this fall. The time required to seek out, interview and nominate this year's group of bright young women did not deter our state chapters. It was also impressive that 27 Chapters filed their Annual Chapter Scholar Awards Report with the State Chair early or on time! Total Scholar Award project donations by all of the Chapters in our state this year totaled \$10,600 dollars. Thirteen chapters achieved Laureate Chapter Status with their \$500 lump sum donations. Congratulations to chapters H, Y, AB, AD, AE, AH, AM, AP, AO, AQ, AV and AX on this achievement! Special thanks to Chapter AB for their additional overwhelming support of this project as a \$1000 Project Donor.

New Jersey had 4 winners chosen last spring in 2024 as recipients for Scholar Awards. They were as follows: Erica Fugger, PhD in American Studies at Rutgers. Shana Jayaraman, PhD in BioMedical Engineering at John's Hopkins. Aakriti Prasai, PhD in Counseling Psychology at NYU and Sydney Rose Shannon, PhD in Biomedical Engineering at John's Hopkins University. These 4 Winners were nominated by Chapters AM, AE, AM Again & AN. In summary, it was an exciting year for Scholar Awards, as we continue to meet and nominate the future leaders and game changers through our project.

LIPEO, Carol Maul & Pat Corkery

NJ State Scholar Awards Chairs



STAR Report

The STAR Scholarship is a very competitive one-time award. In 2024, 900 awards were given, and 12 of the recipients were from New Jersey. In 2023, New Jersey had 10 successful candidates.

By April 30, award notification letters will be mailed to the 2025-2026 applicants and their recommending chapters. We are very proud of the exceptional young women that we sponsor; whether they are awarded the scholarship or not.

But as we begin searching for potential candidates for 2026, are there things we should consider that might help a candidate be successful? In posing this question to local chapter chairs, several additional questions emerged. So we contacted the STAR Project Supervisor at the P.E.O. International Executive office, Nichole Bougher, for clarification. Her responses are as follows. The relationship between the STAR applicant and her recommending chapter has no impact on the evaluation of the student's application. Since STAR is a merit-based scholarship, hardship is not something that is asked about on the application, nor is it taken into consideration by the STAR Board when evaluating applications. Community/Volunteer Service and Extracurricular Activities carry the same weight—one is not more important than the other.

Local chapter chairs offered several suggestions that might help in selecting the most qualified candidate. Ask the student to submit a resume before her chapter interview. Some chapters also provide the student with a simple questionnaire to think about so that the time spent interviewing her can be more productive. Others ask for a writing sample to better gauge how the student expresses herself. It has been established that spelling errors and grammatical mistakes can cause an application to be rejected.

There are many helpful tips on the website that should be given to your applicant. Since most of the students who apply are honor students, they often have advanced courses and required extracurricular activities. The Tips for Successful Application link on the website clearly defines what constitutes Extracurricular Activities and Community Service. It is important to make your applicant aware of these guidelines.

Finally, encourage your candidate to be creative and sell herself in her essay. Help her to show what makes her exceptional. Your encouragement and support of these young women is so important. Thank you for your efforts on their behalf.

Susan Schwarz (AH Colts Neck)

Kelly Zenfell (AJ-Pitman)