

# **PRESS RELEASE**

May 10, 2012

## **ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS CONGRATULATE CHRISTIAN BOSS & GABRIELLE SALERNO RECIPIENTS OF 2012 “GOVERNOR’S AWARDS IN ARTS EDUCATION”**

(Newark, NJ) – During its Wednesday, May 9, 2012, meeting held at Bloomfield Town Hall, the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders honored two high school seniors, Christian Boss of Essex Fells and Gabrielle Salerno of Livingston, for being named recipients of 2012 Governor’s Awards in Arts Education. West Essex High School student Christian Boss earned his Governor’s Award for Excellence in Visual Arts, and Livingston High School student Gabrielle Salerno earned hers for Excellence in Writing. Both students were presented with their Governor’s Awards during a ceremony held at the Trenton War Memorial in Trenton on Thursday, May 10<sup>th</sup>.



2012 recipients of Governor’s Awards in Arts Education, Gabrielle Salerno of Livingston and Christian Boss of Essex Fells, were presented with commendations from the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders by Freeholder Leonard M. Luciano of West Caldwell (left) and Freeholder Vice President Patricia Sebold of Livingston (right) during the Board’s Wednesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, meeting held at Bloomfield Town Hall. **PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON**

The Governor's Awards in Arts Education program began in 1980 to promote awareness and appreciation of the arts, recognizing the creativity, talent and leadership of award winners. The awards are presented to students selected by national and statewide organizations for their exemplary work in creative writing, speech, dance, music, theater and visual arts, as well as to leaders for their exceptional commitment and contribution to arts education. The program also recognizes arts educators and arts education advocates whose leadership has helped to nurture the development of students in the arts across the state.



Christian Boss of Essex Fells displayed and described several drawings taken from his impressive and award-winning portfolio. **PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON**

Christian Boss qualified for his Governor's Award for Excellence in the Visual Arts after being selected by VSA New Jersey, a nonprofit organization founded in 1978 and affiliated with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., and dedicated to promoting the creative power of people. He was presented with his VSA New Jersey award at a ceremony held on April 28, 2012, at the Linwood Middle School in North Brunswick, New Jersey. He was nominated by his high school art teacher, Eileen Dormer, in whose Drawing and Composition and Advanced Placement Art History courses he was enrolled. Christian's portfolio, which demonstrates his mastery of various mediums, such as charcoal, pen and ink, and watercolor, was submitted to VSA New Jersey and then reviewed by a panel of New Jersey artists in an adjudication held on February 18, 2012, along with his biography, letters of recommendation, his interview and the highly stressful and pressure-packed requirement that he create an original artwork on the spot.

Chris is a member of the National Art Honor Society, through which he participated in the International Memory Portrait Project to create portraits of orphans around the world. He also

takes courses in drawing and graphic design at the Montclair Art Museum on Saturdays and weeknights. He will attend either Penn State University or Syracuse University in the fall, where he will study art and double major in the sciences, with the possibility of going on to either dental or medical school. He is the son of his proud parents, Dr. William K. Boss and Rhea Elizabeth Davis Boss, and the brother of his siblings, Lindsey, William and Taylor.



Freeholder Vice President Patricia Sebold of Livingston presented Gabrielle Salerno with her Commendation from the Board. They were joined by members of Gabrielle's family: (from left to right) grandmother Florence Salerno, mother Joann, grandmother Betty Colasuonno and father Nick. **PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON**

Gabrielle Salerno qualified for her Governor's Award after being selected by the New Jersey Council of Teachers of English (NJCTE), an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English, which is devoted to improving the teaching and learning of English and language arts at all levels of education. She was presented with her NJCTE award at a reception held on April 24, 2012, at Union Catholic Regional High School in Scotch Plains, New Jersey.

NJCTE's 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Writing Contest was open to students in grades 9 to 12. A total of 268 submissions were received from students at 31 different schools in the genres of Fiction, Essay and Poetry, including 77 for the Essay competition which had as its topic, "We Are What We Eat". Gabrielle's essay, entitled "Grandma's Cooking", was selected by her high school teacher, Susan Rothbard, to be submitted to NJCTE for adjudication, for which she was awarded a Gold Medal for Excellence in Creative Writing. Gabrielle's award is especially noteworthy and impressive in light of the fact that this is only the first year that she has taken a creative writing class in school. Outside of school, Gabrielle has been involved in competitive cheerleading for nine years and is currently a member of the Central Jersey Allstars of Kenilworth, New Jersey, with whom she has competed at the local, state and national levels and won multiple national

championship competitions over the last several years. She plans to attend Seton Hall University in the fall. She is the daughter of her proud parents, Nick and Joann, and the sister of Rebecca.

During the presentations, Chris Boss displayed and discussed several of his drawings, including thoughtful studies of General George Custer and Charles Manson, as well as a depiction of an evocative statue he saw at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City entitled, “Ugolino and His Sons”, all of which drew praise from everyone in attendance. Gabrielle’s essay, “Grandma’s Cooking”, was read aloud by Freeholder Vice President Patricia Sebold, herself a former high school English teacher. The essay, which poignantly describes the importance of her grandmother’s daily ritual of preparing dinner both for her husband, prior to his passing from cancer, and for the entire family, brought many in the audience to tears of recognition for the circumstances described and respect for the sensitivity of the writing.

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**For Additional Information:**  
**Gary Kroessig, Public Information**  
**Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders**  
**973-621-4452 (phone) 973-621-5696 (fax)**  
**[gkroessig@freeholders.essexcountynj.org](mailto:gkroessig@freeholders.essexcountynj.org)**