

Tyco gives \$135G grant to nonprofit

LAWRENCE — Tyco International has renewed its support for the Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness, granting the organization another \$135,000 for 2006. To date, Tyco has committed \$405,000 to the Mercer Alliance, which was founded in 2004 as a consortium of leaders from Mercer County's business, nonprofit and government sectors who are committed to developing strategies to end homelessness in Mercer County, remedying its root causes rather than only treating its consequences.

The Mercer Alliance has developed programs that decrease the gap between low incomes and growing housing costs. It is estimated that one program alone launched last year — the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Campaign — could generate up to \$9 million for low-wage earners in Mercer County this year.

In 2005, the Mercer Alliance partnered with local banks, nonprofit organizations, the county government and the city of Trenton to expand what was then a one-year-old campaign to increase the number of Mercer County households to file for the significant EITC tax refunds they are due under federal and state laws. The Mercer Alliance launched a public awareness campaign and coordinated training for caseworkers to help its clients file for the EITC refund. The campaign utilized community centers and nonprofits agencies to offer free tax preparation. The results — households filing for EITC through partner sites increased nearly 2000 percent; and for the first three months of this tax credit season, total EITC dollars returned to Mercer County households increased 53 percent, with almost \$4 million more in returns for Mercer families.

"(Tyco's) renewed support of our work will enable the Mercer Alliance to implement several new initiatives over the coming year that utilize the public/private partnership approach so critical to the EITC Campaign's success," said Mercer Alliance Executive Director Allison Badgett.

Tyco is joined in its support of the Mercer Alliance by the Princeton Area Community Foundation, which recently renewed a \$15,000 grant, \$5,000 of which came from the Harbourton Foundation, to specifically support the EITC Campaign.

"Clearly PACF is a visionary funder. Not only have they supported the EITC Campaign from the start; but they also provided the seed grant to launch the Mercer Alliance two years ago," said Badgett. "We are thrilled that they, along with Tyco, have maintained their ongoing commitment to ending homelessness in Mercer County."

For more information on the Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness, or to become a member, call (609) 844-1006 or visit (www.merceralliance.org).