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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. – T.E.E.M. Gateway, a 20-year initiative of the Rutgers NJAES Office of Continuing Professional Education (OCPE) to serve urban at-risk youth, received the 2010 Diversity Leadership Award on April 8 from the University Continuing Education Association (UCEA) at its 95th Annual Conference in San Francisco, CA.

“We are dedicated to helping our young adults become more caring, competent and contributing citizens,” said Kenneth Karamichael, director of T.E.E.M. Gateway, which also manages the Newark YE2S Center. Karamichael accepted the award on behalf of Rutgers T.E.E.M. Gateway. “I’m humbled to accept this award, which represents the collective work of our entire staff and the many agencies and organizations that collaborate with us and support our efforts,” Karamichael said.

Among its key collaborators is the City of Newark, whose Mayor, Cory Booker recently praised T.E.E.M. Gateway’s efforts at the second anniversary celebration of the YE2S Center. “Today we are celebrating the two-year anniversary of this program, which has made success a tangible reality for many of the student participants who were originally on the wrong track and needed guidance,” Mayor Booker said. “Supporting the recovery and growth of our youth is among the greatest and most important challenges we face today. Through this program, we are putting the success of our children first,” said Booker.

T.E.E.M. Gateway manages and continually develops innovative programs aimed at measurably improving the lives of at-risk youth in Newark and urban centers throughout the state. Among its initiatives is the YE2S (Youth Education and Employment Success) Center, which served 1,300 young people alone in its second year of operation. “I was referred to the YE2S program when I was 18,” said YE2S Center graduate, Erick Graham. “I was misguided, misled and confused. Thanks to this program I am currently enrolled at Essex County College. This program…changed my life.”
The first of its kind in the nation, the YE2S Center provides a safe environment for school dropouts and youth most disconnected from the community. The center offers services and guidance to reengage youth with education and the community. “These kids have been disconnected for years,” said Karamichael. “We want to inspire and motivate them.”

Another recent initiative administered by T.E.E.M. Gateway is an AmeriCorps program. Over 30 AmeriCorps members were recruited and placed this year to serve urban communities around New Jersey. Some of these members were once the same troubled youths helped by T.E.E.M. Gateway and are now ready to help others. The AmeriCorps program enables its members to improve communities and the lives of children while giving them skills to prepare for the real world after their year of service ends, said program director Sara Naphas. The members often end up inspiring those they aid, creating a continual cycle of community service. “They empower those they help to grow and give back to their community,” Naphas said.

T.E.E.M Gateway’s Youth Farmstand Program is a more business-minded model initiative that provides training and hands-on entrepreneurial experience to young people, Karamichael said. At-risk youth spend a summer managing the day-to-day operations of farmstands, learning valuable work and management skills in the process, while also supporting local farmers and giving urban residents in Trenton and Newark access to affordable, high-quality, nutritious foods. “The program benefits everyone: youth, farmers and the community,” Karamichael said.

Given the breadth and diversity of T.E.E.M. Gateway’s recent innovative and successful initiatives to help young people, UCEA’s recognition is timely. “This award is aligned with T.E.E.M. Gateway’s longstanding commitment to develop new and creative programs and services to support underserved and at-risk youth,” said OCPE’s director, Ned Lipman. “We are tremendously proud of the entire staff.”

Founded in 1915, UCEA is among the oldest national college and university associations in the United States. UCEA selected Rutgers from among 350 member colleges nationwide to receive...
its new Diversity Leadership Award, which recognizes creative programming that advances academic success, understanding or quality of life of underrepresented groups.

For more information, contact Kenneth Karamichael, senior program coordinator at OCPE and T.E.E.M. Gateway at teemgateway@njaes.rutgers.edu or call 732-932-9271.

Other Rutgers T.E.E.M. Gateway Initiatives & Programs

- **Mentoring** and supporting juvenile ex-offenders with life skills, work training and educational support, as they rejoin society and rebuild their lives.

- **Establishing** the Ceasefire Allstars in partnership with Cobblestone Records, a talented group of youth who create hip hop, R&B and rap that promotes anti-violence and positive messages. One album out; a second album expected to be released in 2010.

- **Connecting** at-risk youth with local mentor artists to create large-scale city murals to help beautify Newark and engage disconnected youth with community service.

- **Coordinating** Community Youth Mapping, an effort to recruit youth to collect and record data on positive, youth-friendly resources, from employers to community centers, available in their area. Over 900 youth resources were mapped in Newark in its first year.

- **Engaging** over 4,000 stakeholders to aggressively address the high dropout rate through the New Jersey High School Graduation Campaign that resulted in truancy initiatives and a statewide action plan.

- **Innovating** new programs to engage and support at-risk youth. The latest launched in 2010: the Green Rangers, a summer employment program that will give at-risk youth exposure to careers in “green” fields.