

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **NORTH JERSEY FEDERAL CREDIT UNION DONATES \$3,500 TO CONFIDENCE CLOSETS**

*Banking institution led by KHS alumna contributes to district initiative that provides toiletries to students who cannot afford them*

Photo attached: Superintendent Eileen Shafer, right, and NJFCU CEO Lourdes Cortez

PATERSON – Superintendent of Schools Eileen Shafer today welcomed North Jersey Federal Credit Union (NJFCU) CEO Lourdes Cortez back to her alma mater John F. Kennedy High School where Cortez presented a \$3,500 donation on behalf of the banking institution to the district’s Confidence Closets initiative.

“I sincerely thank Ms. Cortez and everyone on the North Jersey Federal Credit Union team for their generous donation to the Confidence Closets,” said Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer. “We have had a long-standing partnership for many years to help prepare students to enter the banking industry and financial services careers. This donation will help make sure that our students will have what they need to come to school and be at their very best every day.”

“It’s a great cause,” said Cortez, a graduate of Kennedy High School, about Confidence Closets. “We’re making this donation to give back to the community we serve and that’s what North Jersey Federal Credit Union is all about.”

The Confidence Closets initiative, a joint venture between the district and the Serve Our Schools coalition of Paterson churches, was launched last year to meet a growing need among students for personal hygiene products. Students without access to deodorant, shampoo, toothpaste, or feminine hygiene products are prone to miss school to avoid embarrassment, which can have detrimental consequences on their chances for academic success.

NJFCU’s donation will be used to buy products that will be made available to students in grades six through eight. When the initiative was launched last summer, it was estimated that there were 11,500 students in grades six through eight at 33 different district schools who were in need of toiletries.

NJFCU has been a long-standing educational partner with Paterson Public Schools and Kennedy High School. In 2011, Cortez worked with school and district staff to launch The Castle, an NJFCU branch at the school that is managed by Kennedy High School students. The branch closed when schools had to shut down due to the pandemic. But in November, Cortez and her colleagues joined with school and district officials to open The Castle 2.0, an improved version of the branch that is aimed at teaching students 21st-century digital banking and financial services.

Those who wish to support The Confidence Closets may do so in the following ways:

# PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Paterson – A Promising Tomorrow  
Together We Can*



1. Items can be donated at the Paterson Public Schools Central Office Building, 90 Delaware Ave., Paterson
2. A monetary donation with a check for the purchase of items can be made to:

**The Fund for Paterson Public Schools**

90 Delaware Ave., Paterson, N.J. 07503

Payable to The Fund for Paterson Public Schools.

Write “Confidence Closets” in the memo of the check.

*OR*

**Star of Hope Ministries**

34 Broadway, Paterson, N.J. 07505

Payable to Star of Hope Ministries.

Write “Confidence Closets” in the memo of the check.

3. A monetary donation can be made online via PayPal to the handle @fundforpps or at [www.sohm.org/schools](http://www.sohm.org/schools)

All monetary donations are tax-deductible.

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