

**ESSEX COUNTY EXECUTIVE DiVINCENZO INVITES THE PUBLIC TO
PARTICIPATE
IN THE ANNUAL SUSTAINABLE HOMES AND HABITATS GINGERBREAD
CONTEST
AT THE ESSEX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER**

Roseland, NJ – Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. invites the public to participate in the **2016 Sustainable Homes and Habitats Gingerbread Contest** at the Essex County Environmental Center. The contest is free and there are a variety of categories in which participants can compete. ***The deadline to register is Saturday, December 3rd and all entries must be delivered on Saturday, December 3rd or Monday, December 5th.***

The entries in the Annual Sustainable Homes and Habitats Gingerbread Contest will be on display as follows:

Dates: Wednesday, December 7 through Friday, December 16, 2016
Times: Mondays to Fridays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Place: Essex County Environmental Center
621B Eagle Rock Avenue
Roseland, NJ

An **awards ceremony** will be held as follows:

Dates: Saturday, December 17, 2016
Times: 9:30 a.m.
Place: Essex County Environmental Center
621B Eagle Rock Avenue
Roseland, NJ

“Our *Sustainable Homes and Habitats Gingerbread Contest* is a wonderful event that incorporates our mission to raise awareness about nature with a holiday theme. This hands-on, family-oriented project lets people of all ages learn about the environment in a fun way,” DiVincenzo said. “I am amazed at the creativeness and ingenuity of the entries each winter and look forward to another great contest,” he added.

The public is invited to participate in four categories:

- ***Individual Child Category*** for children ages 14 or younger who work independently on all aspects of their entry.
- ***Group/Family Category*** for children 14 and younger who work as a group or have adult assistance on any aspect of their entry. A maximum of five people can work on one entry.

- **Adult Non-Professional Category** for individuals or groups of people (no more than 5 people per group) ages 15 and older who are students of the culinary arts or are not professional chefs.
- **Adult Professional Category** for individuals or groups of people ages 15 and older who are professional chefs or are working in the culinary arts.

The base of all entries cannot be larger than 12 inches by 18 inches. There must be at least three (3) identifiable sustainable building design elements, such as candy glass skylights, rainwater reuse, solar panels, etc. and/or a natural habitat component. Children's entries may have a cardboard foundation; however, all surfaces, including the base, must be covered with an edible product. All adult entries must be entirely edible, including the base, structure and all decorations.

The deadline to register is Saturday, December 3rd. All entries must be delivered to the Environmental Center on either Saturday, December 3rd or Monday, December 5th. Entries will be judged on guideline adherence, creative use a nature theme, used of green building design techniques and skill in decoration. Ribbons and prizes will be awarded in all categories. The decisions of the judges are final. Essex County and the Essex County Environmental Center do not assume responsibility for damage or loss.

For more information and to obtain a complete set of contest rules, please call the Essex County Environmental Center at 973-228-8776 or visit www.essexcountynj.org.

For people who would like to enter but have been too busy to register or need a little help getting started, the Essex County Environmental Center staff is hosting a **“Gingerbread House Making Workshop.”** Some materials will be provided, however participants are encouraged to bring their own materials. The free workshop will be held as follows:

Date: Saturday, December 3, 2016
Time: 11 a.m.
Place: Essex County Environmental Center
621B Eagle Rock Avenue
Roseland, NJ

All creations made during the “Gingerbread House Making Workshop” must be completed by the end of the class at 1 p.m. to be eligible for the contest. Saturday, December 3rd is the last day to register for the contest.

The Essex County Park System was created in 1895 and is the first county park system established in the United States. The Park System consists of more than 6,000 acres and has 22 parks, five reservations, an environmental center, a zoo, Treetop Adventure Course, ice skating rink, roller skating rink, three public golf courses, golf driving range, two miniature golf courses, three off-leash dog facilities, a castle and the Presby Memorial Iris Gardens.