

## Newark Student's Photograph Selected for International Exhibit



(l) to (r) Tanaija Mercer (holding flowers and certificate award) is congratulated by Keith Burton, principal, Ivy Hill Elementary School; Iesha Suber, coordinator of Safe Kids Essex County and injury prevention and outreach coordinator for the New Jersey Trauma Center; and her parents, LaToya Eoff and Royheine Thornton

### PHOTOVOICE Brings Awareness To Children's Pedestrian Safety Around The World

As part of PHOTOVOICE, a photojournalism project conducted by Safe Kids Worldwide, a photograph taken by Ivy Hill Elementary School sixth grader Tanaija Mercer is appearing in an international exhibit currently being viewed across the globe. Her photograph was selected from more than 4,300 entries.

To recognize her accomplishment, the New Jersey Trauma Center at the UMDNJ-University Hospital, which leads Safe Kids Essex County, gave Tanaija Mercer an award during a special assembly at her school on February 26, 2009. Her photograph and part of the PHOTOVOICE photojournalism exhibit were on display during the assembly.

Safe Kids Essex County strives to prevent unintentional childhood injury, a leading killer of children ages 14 and under. The purpose of the PHOTOVOICE project was to give children the opportunity to document and explain behaviors and environmental obstacles they encounter as pedestrians. Safe Kids Worldwide provided U.S. and international coalitions – including Safe Kids Essex County – with program curriculum and cameras to allow students to photograph their pedestrian environments. The project was made possible through a grant from FedEx.

Mercer's photograph highlights one of the various environmental factors that make it difficult for Newark children to cross the street safely. According to Iesha Suber, coordinator of Safe Kids Essex County and injury prevention and outreach coordinator for the New Jersey Trauma Center, there are many factors that increase these difficulties. These include traffic congestion, a shortage of crossing guards in high volume areas, and a lack of crosswalks.

