



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Addabbo Hosts Interactive Diabetes Awareness Event Focused on Healthy Living

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR. November 27, 2024



Senator Addabbo welcomes Cornell University Cooperative Extension-NYC.

In honor of November as Diabetes Awareness Month, Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. hosted an interactive and informative diabetes information session at Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Roman Catholic Church in Ozone Park on November 20, 2024. The event aimed to empower individuals living with diabetes by providing them with valuable knowledge, practical tips, engaging activities and healthy giveaways, such as fresh fruit and planting seeds, to lead a fulfilling life despite the challenges posed by the disease.

"Our community is stronger when we support each other, especially those living with diabetes," Addabbo said. "Together, we can make a difference."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 37 million Americans have diabetes, which is about 1 in 10 people. Additionally, 96 million adults in the U.S. have prediabetes, putting them at risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

The event began with a live cooking demonstration conducted by Cornell University Cooperative Extension-NYC. Attendees were treated to the preparation of ratatouille, a delicious French vegetable stew. To further promote healthy choices, everyone in attendance received a sample of the dish, accompanied by refreshing fruit-infused water. The culinary experience was followed by light exercises designed to invigorate participants and promote circulation.

Courtney Sartini, Director of Agriculture at Queens County Farm Museum, delivered a compelling speech on the benefits of growing one's own vegetables. She encouraged attendees to take up gardening and provided them with packets of planting seeds for zucchini, bean and assorted greens. As one of the longest continually farmed sites in New York State, the museum serves as an excellent resource for individuals interested in learning more about sustainable agriculture.

Jane Giordano, a Certified Diabetes Educator/Dietitian at St. Francis DeMatteis Center / Catholic Health, delivered an enlightening talk on the importance of portion control and dividing one's plate to achieve a well-balanced meal. She emphasized that half of the plate should consist of vegetables and fruits, while at least half of the grain serving should be whole grains. Giordano also stressed the significance of choosing fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk and water over sugary beverages like soda and sports drinks.

To further demonstrate the possibilities of delicious, diabetes-friendly cuisine, a complimentary dinner was served, sponsored by the Ozone Park-Woodhaven Kiwanis and the Ozone-Park-Howard Beach-Woodhaven Lions Club. It was catered by Caribbean Cabana of Richmond Hill. The menu featured a delightful array of dishes, including lentil soup, grilled chicken, grilled tilapia, string beans, broccoli, carrots, brown rice, and for dessert, plain yogurt with fresh berries and a touch of honey on the side. This delicious meal showed that healthy eating can be both satisfying and flavorful.

During dinner, Jane Giordano engaged the audience by asking diabetes-related health questions based on her presentation. The first person to correctly answer each question correctly received a special gift basket from Parker Jewish Institute.

Grow NYC, another event partner generously provided attendees with bags of apples and pears to take home with them. Tutu Badaru, Assistant Director of Food Access Initiatives and Partnerships for the group, spoke about its mission “to empower all New Yorkers with equitable access to fresh, locally grown food, neighborhood green spaces, and care for the environment.”

"I extend my heartfelt appreciation to our experts and sponsors for their invaluable contributions to this successful event," Addabbo said. "Educating ourselves about diabetes is crucial. Events like these empower people to take charge of their health."

Addabbo thanked the event sponsors: Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Roman Catholic Church, the Ozone Park-Woodhaven Kiwanis, the Ozone-Park-Howard Beach-Woodhaven Lions Club, Parker Jewish Institute, Cornell University Cooperative Extension-NYC, Grow NYC, St. Francis Hospital / Catholic Health, Theresa Homecare Inc., and Caribbean Cabana.