



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Senator Addabbo Hosts Self-Defense Training to Raise Awareness During Sexual Assault Awareness Month

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR. April 25, 2025



Everyone had a lot of fun while they were learning.

On a beautiful spring evening, residents gathered on the Center Green at the Shops at Atlas Park in Glendale on April 24, 2025, to participate in a dynamic self-defense training hosted by State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. in partnership with Tiger Schulmann's Martial Arts of Glendale. The event, held in commemoration of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, aimed to empower community members with vital self-defense skills and raise awareness about sexual violence prevention.

Over 40 participants of all ages and genders engaged in a one-hour session of mixed martial arts designed to boost confidence and teach practical defense techniques. Each attendee who completed the class received a coupon for a free week of classes at Tiger Schulmann's Glendale, generously sponsored by owner and manager Sensei Chris Iavarone. The evening opened with an inspiring testimonial from survivor "Michele," who bravely shared her journey of recovery, creating an atmosphere of resilience and hope. Following her story, Sensei Jason Lopez led the group through fundamental self-defense moves.

Support was provided by around 10 instructors and assistant instructors who circulated among participants, ensuring proper technique and safety throughout the training.

After the hands-on session, attendees had the opportunity to connect with representatives from Safe Horizon and the NYPD Special Victims Division, who provided additional resources and support to promote safety and awareness.

According to RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network), approximately 463,634 individuals aged 12 or older are victims of sexual assault annually in the United States — a stark reminder of the importance of community education and preparedness.

"Empowering both survivors and community members is a crucial step toward reducing violence," said Senator Addabbo. "By providing accessible self-defense skills and information, we hope to foster a sense of safety and strength among vulnerable potential victims."

The event's first half focused on foundational concepts of empowerment, awareness, and confidence, emphasizing proper stance, distance management, and striking techniques—including punches, kicks, and elbows—designed to help individuals defend themselves effectively.

In the second half, Sensei Lopez demonstrated close-range defense tactics through interactive drills, encouraging participants to practice escaping grips and responding to potential ground attacks in a controlled, safe environment. The session challenged participants both mentally and physically, reinforcing skills that could make a difference in real-world situations.

“I want to thank all of our partners for helping bring this event to life,” Addabbo said. “A special thanks to Tiger Schulmann’s Glendale for their generosity in offering free classes—giving residents a chance to continue their self-defense journey and build lasting skills.”

As the community continues to prioritize safety and awareness, events like these serve as powerful reminders of the strength found in knowledge and unity.

"Do a little something every day to be ready for the one day you need it," concluded Sensei Chris Iavarone.

Those seeking help, resources or services, can contact Safe Horizon’s Rape and Sexual Assault Hotline at 212-227-3000.