



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

## Sheila Lewandowski

MICHAEL GIANARIS May 15, 2012



*Women of*  
**DISTINCTION**  
HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

***Sheila Lewandowski***

*Sheila Lewandowski was selected as a 2012 Woman of Distinction by Senator Michael N. Gianaris.*



Sheila Lewandowski

**Award:** HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

**Year:** 2012

Sheila Lewandowski believes in the ability of all individuals to contribute to the betterment of their local and global communities in ways big and small.

A resident of Long Island City, Ms. Lewandowski is co-founder and executive director of The Chocolate Factory Theater. Through her leadership, the theater has supported over 800 artists and as many as 35,000 visitors since opening its doors in 2004. In addition, Ms. Lewandowski instituted the annual Taste of Long Island City as an economic and community development project, the proceeds of which further the work of The Chocolate Factory's artists each year.

From 2004 to 2006 Ms. Lewandowski served as the first managing director of Queens Council on the Arts (QCA). During this time, she was instrumental in helping to secure new funding for QCA, increasing the budget by over 20%.

Prior to joining QCA, Ms. Lewandowski served from 1987 to 2004 as associate director of the Girls' Vacation Fund (since renamed Girls' Quest) a youth services agency focused on empowering under-served girls from New York City. Her devotion to Girls' Quest started as a child when she was recruited out of the Stapleton Housing Project in Staten Island. She credits the agency as one of the major influences in her passion and commitment to serve her community. During her tenure, Girls' Quest assisted over 7,000 girls. Ms. Lewandowski is proud to be in contact with these young women today, as fellow community leaders, devoted parents and friends.

Ms. Lewandowski received a fellowship from the United Way of New York City's Non-Profit Leadership Institute in 2004. She also lends her time and talent as a volunteer member of her local Community Board 2, the Board of the Non-Profit Coordinating Committee of New York

City, One Percent for Culture Campaign, Queens Tourism Council and is a founding member of LIC Business Women. She tirelessly devotes much of her time to many causes from helping a local community garden build a compost bin to helping organize the local Halloween parade, to advocating for the arts and artists in New York City, and beyond.

For all of her efforts she has been recognized by New York City Councilmember Leroy Comrie, New York State Assemblywoman Catherine T. Nolan, the Long Island City Business Improvement District, and the Queens County Democratic Club, among others.