



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

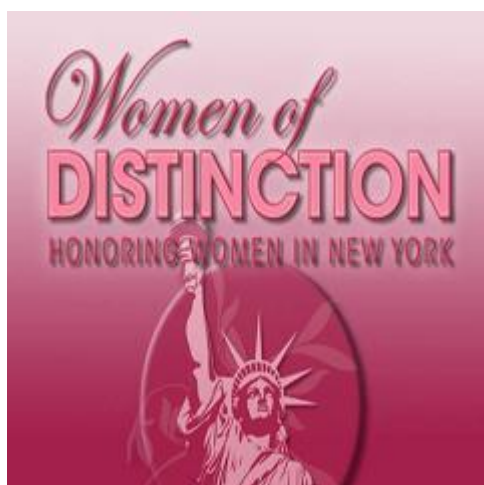
Lakia T. Echols

JAMES SANDERS JR. May 13, 2014



Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

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Award: HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Year: 2014

Lakia T. Echols is the founder of MakeMyMotherProud, whose motto is to “act as though it’s impossible to fail.” As a single mother, 13-year veteran serving with the United States Army, motivational speaker, leadership teacher and highly motivated community leader, she managed to attain a Bachelor’s in Organizing Management from St. Joseph’s College in 2013.

Prior to joining the United States Army, Ms. Echols’ life was all about a negative ending. She states, “if you gave me a million dollars, I would have never believed I would of ended up where I am today.” While deployed in Kuwait from 2004-2006, she was involved in community development and wanted to go back overseas to continue her mission. Her mission changed, however, when she was watching youth in the Far Rockaway community, at war with each other. Many of those youth had little or no remorse, motivation or hope; Ms. Echols realized at that point in her life that her mission was to stay in the Far Rockaway community to help the young adults pursue a better future.

Ms. Echols gives selfless service to her community with fun-filled events for youth and their parents such as college preparation workshops, talent/fashion shows, the Cinderella Ball Adult Prom and basketball tournaments. She teaches women leadership and mentors more than 65 students from within the Queens area. In addition, Ms. Echols has helped more than 200 kids receive applications for the Knowji program, which helps students improve on their SATs in the Liberty Partnership Program.

During Superstorm Sandy, Ms. Echols worked tirelessly to help residents, managing to help secure funding from private companies to distribute checks to more than 20 families in need. She also encouraged young people in the community to get involved during the storm by helping senior citizens. For Christmas, she organized a successful Santa’s Sleigh Run in the Far Rockaway Community, distributing toys and clothes.

Ms. Echols is deeply committed to educating and providing services to the underserved. Her sincere love of people and her ability to lead others is a gift that blossomed in adolescence and was formally recognized in 2013 when she received the Empowerment Award and, subsequently, the 2014 Queens Impact Award for her hard work with MakeMyMotherProud.