



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

ADDABBO RECOGNIZES MARISSA BERNOWITZ AS A WOMAN OF DISTINCTION IN STATE SENATE CEREMONY

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR May 14, 2014



Queens, NY (May 14, 2014) – At a State Capitol ceremony in Albany, State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. had the privilege of honoring Marissa Bernowitz, a well-known Rockaway disaster relief activist who was displaced from her home in Hurricane Sandy, but who immediately turned her energies to helping others in her community who also suffered tremendous losses in the horrific October 2012 superstorm. As Addabbo’s 2014 “New York State Senate Woman of Distinction,” Ms. Bernowitz joined other extraordinary women from every corner of the Empire State in being honored at the annual Senate recognition event on May 13th.

“Marissa has been a remarkable inspiration to all of us, and I am more than delighted to honor her as a 2014 Woman of Distinction,” Addabbo said. “Despite the losses she suffered herself in Hurricane Sandy, Marissa has dedicated virtually every day since the storm to helping others in the community. Her

Rockaway Free Flea Market has provided many needed items to people who were left with nothing. She has brought holiday smiles to the faces of children whose lives were changed dramatically by the storm, and her efforts both immediately after Hurricane Sandy and continuing to this very day are making a positive difference in the lives of people who are continuing to recover and rebuild.”

Marissa Bernowitz became a disaster relief volunteer coordinator immediately following the October 2012 Superstorm and has continued to successfully serve her neighbors in the Rockaways and in many other areas around New York City still plagued with post-storm struggles. No stranger to loss herself – having lost first her apartment and then her job as a result of Hurricane Sandy – Marissa quickly began working to ensure the safety of her neighbors and those left behind as they adjusted to the challenges of overcoming the destruction. Not knowing how much longer her storm-ravaged community would be without power and the services of local businesses, she turned to social media in the immediate aftermath of the storm to reach out to the “outside world” and request desperately needed aid.

Marissa volunteered at local distribution sites throughout the Peninsula, helping to expand the reach of emergency supplies, items and services that were available from different sources. In January, 2013 she founded and began operating the Rockaway Free Flea Market to help those still in need. She and a team of dedicated and caring community women rent trucks, transport supplies and store and distribute them accordingly.

In addition, Marissa helps storm victims fill out and file Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) paperwork, works to get people into the Disaster Case Management and CAN system, and signs people up for community services. Bernowitz is also the Director of the We Care NY Queens Division, a volunteer position.

“Marissa’s work never ends, and she is tireless in her efforts to help her neighbors and her community come back better and stronger than ever,” Addabbo said. “I am incredibly proud and privileged to have her as a friend and as a constituent.”

Despite all of her hard work, Marissa and her two sons remain displaced, almost two years after Hurricane Sandy’s landfall.