



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## Sanders Conducts Vet Valentine Visit; Gift Giveaway to Vets at St. Albans VA

JAMES SANDERS JR. February 10, 2017



In celebration of Valentine's Day, Marine Corps veteran and New York State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village, Far Rockaway) distributed 250 free gift bags filled with clothing and other items to residents at the New York State Veterans Home at St. Albans on February 10, 2017.

"Valentine's Day is a celebration of love and affection, a golden opportunity to let our veterans know that we care about them and that they are not forgotten," Sanders said. "It

was a great joy for me to spend time with these men and women today, to thank them for their service to our country and to offer them a small token of our appreciation.”

Sanders gave away blankets, socks, hats, snacks, backpacks, tote bags, water bottles and pencils. The gifts were donated to his office by the Veterans Miracle Center, New York Road Runners and Queens Library.

“I would like to extend a special thank you to all of our co-sponsors, without whom this event would not have been possible,” Sanders said. “Their generosity and commitment to helping this community will not soon be forgotten. I would also like to thank the New York State Veterans Home at St. Albans for their hospitality and allowing us to use their space to interact with their residents.”

Representatives from the New York Road Runners were in attendance and spoke to the veterans about their NYRR Striders program and the importance of staying active at any age. Mitchell Strong, a Vietnam Air Force veteran and NYRR Striders coach, demonstrated for the vets, some simple exercises they could do from the comfort of a chair. Also in attendance from NYRR were: Zakia Haywood director of community services, Wesley Davis, coordinator of community services, and Ruthie Campbell, community liaison for Queens.

The patients at the New York State Veterans Home at St. Albans have served in either World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam War, or Gulf War and have suffered a service-related injury that requires skilled nursing care. Others are dependents of military personnel, who receive medical or rehabilitative care. Residents range in age from 45 to 100 years old, and their stay can last anywhere from 6-8 weeks to the rest of their lives. Sanders' father, James Sanders Sr. who is also a veteran and lives at the home, was in attendance at the event.

“It was an honor to partner with Senator Sanders and donate these much-needed items to our local veterans,” said Queens Library President and CEO Dennis M. Walcott, “We appreciate being able to show our love for those who bravely and selflessly served our country. The Library’s affection for them lasts 365 days a year.”