



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

Senator Fred Akshar Honors Jennifer O'Brien as a Woman of Distinction

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Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Jennifer O'Brien

(ALBANY, NY) This week Senator Akshar recognized Jennifer O'Brien as his NYS Senate 2017 Woman of Distinction for the 52nd Senate District.

Each year, the New York State Senate honors women who have enriched the quality of life in their communities across New York.

Jennifer O'Brien wears many important hats in the community while caring for her husband Paul and daughters Paige and Maggie. She currently works for Health Processes Inc., a respected pharmaceutical and industrial gelatin and adhesives firm, while also serving as the founding Executive Director of Life is Washable, Inc., known as the Magic Paintbrush Project. On her free time, Jennifer has volunteered as a coordinator for hospice and serves as the Executive Director of the American Special Hockey Association.

Jennifer and her team work diligently at the Magic Paintbrush Project, the first of its kind in the nation, to provide innovative workshops and programs designed to improve mobility, communication, socialization, and community involvement for individuals and families with special needs.

Jennifer has worked extensively in her community as a dedicated advocate for the special needs community. O'Brien recently served as the project coordinator for the "OurSpace at Rec Park" project. This is a community space designed to provide a total of four acres of accessible playground, including a tree house, innovative garden, and amphitheater for families across the district.

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"Jennifer has shown true dedication in providing the special needs community and their families with inclusive, safe, and exciting spaces to learn and grow", said Senator Fred Akshar. "I'm truly inspired by the great work she has done for our community and I'm proud to select her as the 52nd District's 2017 Woman of Distinction."

Among her many projects, Jennifer has also been involved in the production of "Sensory Safety Kits" that are designed specifically to support and provide individuals and families with various sensory needs with helpful tools to improve their experience at community

gatherings such as sports games and concerts.

Read Jennifer's Full Bio Below:

Jennifer O'Brien of Greene serves as the Executive Director of Life Is Washable, Inc. (also known as "The Magic Paintbrush Project"), which she founded in 2005. Mrs. O'Brien was inspired to create the program while searching for a way to encourage movement for her two daughters who have cerebral palsy.

Mrs. O'Brien leads her talented team to serve individuals with special needs and their supporting community of caregivers, including family members and service agencies. Since its inception, Life Is Washable, Inc. has served over 45,000 participants in the Southern Tier through its creative family and caregiver engagement programming. Workshops are specifically designed to provide both physical and cognitive activities for those diagnosed with a developmental disability and serve all ages from infants to the geriatric. The Magic Paintbrush Project has the distinction of being the only known family engagement program of this type in the United States.

Mrs. O'Brien has also developed other innovative programs such as "Friendly Access Safety Kits" and "Fair Play" adaptive sports. She continually advocates for the special needs community, developing innovative approaches for them to be included in the larger community. Most recently, Mrs. O'Brien served as project coordinator for the "OurSpace at Rec Park" project. Completed in 2016, the four-acre park project welcomes Southern Tier residents of all ages to a fully accessible play space, which includes an innovative garden, tree house, amphitheater and playground. It is the largest fully accessible playground in the State of New York. OurSpace turned what was once an underused and deteriorating park into a vibrant community space, welcoming thousands of families each year.

In addition to these achievements, Mrs. O'Brien also works full time for Health Processes, Inc. A tireless volunteer, Mrs. O'Brien serves as the Executive Director of the American Special Hockey Association. She also volunteered with Hospice & Palliative Care of Western Colorado (now known as HopeWest) from 1996-2004, and worked for Hospice of Chenango County from 2004-2005. She is most proud of her family, husband Paul, daughters Paige and Maggie and their extended "kids."