



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

## Donna Schaertl

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

***Donna Schaertl***

Donna Schaertl, the wife of a career military officer, credits the military for teaching her about duty, honor, commitment, sacrifice and resiliency.

Ms. Schaertl collects items to send to deployed service members, organizing send-offs and homecomings for local National Guard and Reserve units, and supporting their families during deployment. She organizes events such as the “Blue Star Canteen” to support local Blue Star Mothers through the Canandaigua VA, and works with the VA Medical Center to support its programs for returning veterans and their families. Ms. Schaertl has planned the

Veteran's Day celebration each November at Red Jacket High School and has been instrumental in the Flag Day ceremony each year.

Not long after Ms. Schaertl's son, Jared, was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, he tragically drowned in an unsecured swimming pool at just four years old. This devastating event led Ms. Schaertl to create the Jared Schaertl Memorial Fund and organize Autism Awareness Month events in her local school district. Jared is the inspiration for Ms. Schaertl's commitment to causes that lower the rates of preventable injuries to children.

Ms. Schaertl is a certified car seat technician and volunteer with the Red Jacket Fire Department. She partnered with local law enforcement and the Ontario County Safety Council to create the annual Bike Rodeo and the "Shop With a Cop" program. She has worked to unite local law enforcement agencies with the "Do the Right Thing Ontario County" program, serves as the Executive Event Coordinator for the Police Benevolent Society, and gives her time to support first responders. In addition, she volunteers with Operation Safe Child and worked with Thompson Health to start her own coalition, Safe Kids Finger Lakes.

At the Manchester-Shortsville school district, Ms. Schaertl teaches fire prevention, a Home Alone Safety Program, and internet and personal protection programs. She expanded the Red Ribbon program to the high school and has taken on the issue of distracted and drunk driving with older students. She does all of this while working full-time at the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES.

Ms. Schaertl says, "These programs and events have helped me to come to terms with the death of my child, and I have been able to work with and meet some of the most amazing people and everyday heroes. If I make a difference in just one child's life, all my time and effort have been worth it."