



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

## Her brother would be proud: Senator Murphy presents charity founder with 2017 woman of distinction award

TERRENCE MURPHY May 10, 2017

| ISSUE: **WOMEN OF DISTINCTION, MY BROTHER VINNY**



Albany, NY - Thanks to "My Brother Vinny" and its founder, Paula Miritello, there over 450 veterans in the Hudson Valley who sleep more comfortably at night.

For the past four years, "My Brother Vinny," a charitable organization founded by Ms. Miritello, has been responding to the needs of former enlisted men and women by bringing furniture and housewares to formerly homeless veterans. On Tuesday, May 9th, Senator

Terrence Murphy honored Ms. Miritello's volunteer work by presenting her with the New York State Senate 2017 Woman of Distinction Award. The award is given to outstanding women living and working in New York State whose contributions have greatly enriched the quality of life in their communities.

Senator Murphy had previously recognized the charitable work of My Brother Vinny with a proclamation in August 2015, when the organization helped its 200th veteran, and again in March 2017 when it hit a milestone by aiding its 400th veteran. Since then, My Brother Vinny has provided furniture and housewares to more than 427 formerly homeless veterans.

"My Brother Vinny has done an incredible job in helping veterans restart their lives. There are men and women who fought for this country, left V.A. hospitals or were discharged from the service and have found themselves without a bed to sleep in or pots to cook with until Paula came along," said Senator Murphy. "When it comes to giving, Paula is in a class by herself. She works full-time, then donates her time to bring furniture and supplies to veterans who may have little for themselves, other than an empty apartment. Her generosity has helped turn a lot of lives around."

"This is an amazing honor, and I thank Senator Murphy for recognizing our efforts to help veterans feel more at home," said Ms. Miritello. "I feel fortunate to have the support of a dedicated group of volunteers who are always willing to go the extra mile so a vet can have a bed to sleep in or a lamp to read by. Seeing the smile on a vet's face when our van pulls up makes it all worthwhile."

Ms. Miritello's mission began in an almost casual manner, springing from an impromptu conversation with a formerly homeless veteran who was moving into an apartment and was looking for a couch. Ms. Miritello offered to help, and her venture, dubbed "My Brother

Vinny," mushroomed from there.

My Brother Vinny was founded in June 2013, and is named in honor of Ms. Miritello's special needs brother. He lived his life with cerebral palsy before passing away in 2000, but refused to be defined by his disability.

My Brother Vinny fills a void left by the federal government, social services and others. All of the veterans they assist come from many different branches of military service with varied degrees of disabilities and hardships.

Ms. Miritello's has her own army of volunteers (many of whom were helped by My Brother Vinny) who pick up and deliver the beds, couches, tables, dressers, chairs, dishes, and household items. Much of the furniture she and her crews deliver comes from hotels undergoing renovations or movie sets. All of the items donated to My Brother Vinny are in pristine condition and are stored in weatherproof units until they are ready to be delivered.

On top of her time consuming, but fulfilling volunteer work, Ms. Miritello has worked full-time for the past 19 years for the Department of Environmental Protection.

My Brother Vinny's motto is "Helping mankind one good deed at a time." It is more than just a saying for Paula Miritello; it is a way of life.