



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## **Senator Sanders Hosts Sexual Assault Prevention Event Following Rapes in Jamaica, Richmond Hill**

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In light of the recent rapes in Richmond Hill and Jamaica, Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village, Far Rockaway) held a Sexual Assault Defense Training workshop on Wednesday, August 23, 2017 at Holy Unity Baptist Church in Jamaica.

The event aimed to educate community members on how to protect themselves from becoming the victim of a sexual assault. Information on resources for survivors including support services, counseling, and legal rights were also presented. Some 60 people participated in the program, which was similar to a training Senator Sanders held in April 2016 in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

“Sexual assault is a serious crime that affects the physical and emotional well-being of survivors long after the attack is over,” Senator Sanders said. “We are here to raise awareness of this type of violence and do our part to educate as many people as we can in an effort to prevent future incidents from occurring, and to encourage those who have been victimized to seek help.”

One in three women and one in eleven men will be the victims of sexual assault at least once in their lifetime, according to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, which cites data from the FBI and Journal of Traumatic Stress. It is estimated that there is one sexual assault every 90 seconds in the United States.

When it comes to what constitutes a sexual assault, two of the biggest factors are consent and incapacitation, according to Captain John Ganley, Executive Officer of the 103rd Precinct. He explained that once a person clearly communicates that they do not want a sexual act to be initiated or continue it must stop, or it becomes illegal. Also, when someone is incapacitated to the point where they are not able to convey non-consent of a sexual activity either verbally or physically and it still occurs that is also illegal.

The centerpiece of the event was a live safety demonstration conducted by Avi Avramcheyiv, the founder and chief instructor of NY Self Defense Academy and a former hand-to-hand combat instructor with the Israeli military. He taught attendees how to fight off an attacker who is armed with a knife or a gun, as well as how to escape from a variety of other scenarios such as being choked, pinned to the ground or against a wall.

“It’s very simple to defend yourself,” Avramcheyiv said. “All you need are a pair of hands, a pair of legs, fingernails, teeth, and you’re fine.”

The fighting technique is known as Krav Maga, a military self-defense system developed in Israel. It has no rules and is focused on self-preservation in real world situations.

This is the third safety training where Sanders has collaborated with Avramcheyiv. The Senator presented him with a certificate of recognition for volunteering his time to help the community protect themselves from violence.

Also on hand at the event was Victoria Maiello of Safe Horizon, a victim assistance organization whose mission is to provide support, prevent violence, and promote justice for victims of crime and abuse, their families and communities.

Senator Sanders would like to extend a special thanks to the law enforcement who supported the event from the 101st, 102nd and 103rd Precincts. We would also like to thank Bishop Richard Moore, the pastor of Holy Baptist Church for allowing us to use the space.