



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Joins Jefferson County Organizations In Effort To Curb Youth Drug Use

PATTY RITCHIE July 19, 2018



State Senator Patty Ritchie is teaming up with “Jefferson County Businesses Against Drugs” (JCBAD) to help create a public awareness campaign that aims to educate children on the dangers of drugs.

The businesses belonging to JCBAD are creating a new program designed to complement existing drug prevention programs, as well as bring guest speakers to local schools and youth-based events.

To assist the group in its effort, Senator Ritchie has secured \$50,000 in state funding that will leverage an additional \$50,000 in local resources from JCBAD. Notable local businesses and organizations—such as the Knights of Columbus Council 259, Northern New York Community Foundation, Slack Chemical Company, Pala Wood Services, Knowlton Technologies—have already pledged major financial assistance to further these efforts, and other sponsors are being sought.

“I applaud JCBAD’s efforts to directly engage in the battle against drugs in our communities,” said Senator Ritchie, who serves on the New York State Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction said. “By creating this program, our community will have one more weapon in this fight. Hopefully, this initiative will help children better understand the negative power drugs have and ultimately, get them to say ‘no’ to using these dangerous substances.”

The Northern New York Community Foundation (NNYCF) will administer the program’s funding, in partnership with the Knights of Columbus Council 259. The establishment of the program comes on the heels of an event in May, where Senator Ritchie teamed up with the NNYCF to bring former NFL Quarterback Ryan Leaf to Watertown to speak with students and the community about his battle with drug and alcohol abuse.

“We all know how bad the drug problem has gotten in not only our community, but across New York State and the entire country,” JCBAD organizer John Morgia said. “We need to increase the education we provide to our children while they are in school so they will begin to understand it isn’t a good idea to pick up a pill or accept an offer of drugs from someone else. I want to thank Senator Ritchie for joining our efforts and helping keep our children safe.”

“The best way we can help combat the challenges brought on by substance abuse is for our communities to take a holistic approach, where we all find ways to do everything we can to

help. We are honored to partner again with Senator Ritchie and others who are willing to continue to be proactive and vigilant in recognizing that healthy communities are essential to so many other aspects of the well-being of our region,” said Rande Richardson, Community Foundation executive director.

This is the latest effort by Senator Ritchie to support anti-drug programs. In recent years, she has delivered more than \$200,000 to help school districts throughout Central and Northern New York provide in-school anti-drug programs to students.

In addition to these funds, Senator Ritchie successfully advocated for record funding in the recent state budget to help combat the opioid epidemic, totaling \$247 million and secured \$156,000 to bring drug treatment programs inside of the Jefferson County Jail.

Additionally, Senator Ritchie has also secured support to help law local enforcement address the drug epidemic and sponsored legislation to help better provide help to those looking to break the cycle of addiction.