



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

# **Building Healthy Relationships is Topic of Discussion at Senator Sanders' Clergy Breakfast Recognizing Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM)**

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In recognition of April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village, Far Rockaway) made “Building Healthy Relationships,” the theme of this month’s Community Clergy Breakfast, held at the Faith Center in Far Rockaway on April 25, 2019.

“We are here to train clergy leaders on how to identify the signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships among their congregation by recognizing and addressing the needs of the whole person – mind, body and spirit,” Sanders said.

The breakfast featured a presentation by Sheltering Arms, a program that focuses on building and strengthening families. Their goal is to stabilize family crises and prevent foster care involvement so families can stay together.

Tatyanne Moreira Correa, a domestic violence specialist at Sheltering Arms, covered topics like the definitions of sexual assault and domestic violence and the facts and myths associated with both. Sexual assault takes many forms including attacks such as rape or attempted rape, as well as any unwanted sexual contact or threats, she explained.

Domestic violence occurs when one intimate partner or dominant household member exerts power and control over other member(s) using physical, verbal, psychological or emotional and technological methods, according to New York State’s Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV).

Some myths associated with domestic violence are that it is uncommon, that men and women sometimes push each other around when they get angry, but it rarely involves someone getting physically hurt, that it is not abuse if there are no physical injuries, or when a person is abused, it is easy to leave.

There are many reasons why someone would find it hard to leave an abusive relationship such as fear of losing children, fear or harm, love, denial, economic dependence, fear of not being able to survive, fear of being alone, loyalty, shame, guilt, substance abuse, fear of the unknown and much more.

In 2018, in New York City, there were 30 intimate partner homicides and 25 family homicides, according to the Mayor's Office to end Domestic and Gender-Based Violence. Also in 2018, the NYPD responded to 250,447 domestic incident reports (DIRs). Of those, 111,330 were intimate partner-related and 86,662 were family-related. The relationship type was unknown for the remaining 55,455 DIRs.

"Although the statistics may be daunting, there is always help and hope," Sanders said. "My office will continue to partner with Sheltering Arms and similar groups to raise awareness of the resources that exist for those who may be stuck in a toxic relationship."

We would like to thank the Faith Center for allowing us to use their space for the event. We would also like to thank the event sponsor, Sheltering Arms.