



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Ortt Honors Lockport Business Owner with 2019 “Women of Distinction” Award

ROBERT G. ORTT May 8, 2019

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On Tuesday, Sen. Rob Ortt welcomed Lockport business owner, Jennifer D'Andrea, to Albany to receive a 2019 “Women of Distinction” Award. Each year, women from each Senate District across New York State are chosen to be recognized for their outstanding contributions to their respective communities. This year’s recipient, Jennifer D'Andrea, was chosen for her work in providing housing for homeless and disabled veterans and their families.

After losing her spouse to an opiate overdose in 2010, Jennifer and her four children struggled to cope but soon realized that in their heartache, an opportunity to help others presented itself. As a result of her and her children's loss, her life experience growing up in a military family, and her struggle to find resources to help get and her family get through their tragedy, Jennifer decided to create what was so desperately lacking in her community.

In 2012, Jennifer took action and founded 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, S.E.R.V. Niagara. S.E.R.V. Niagara's mission is to Support, Empower, and Respect Veterans. S.E.R.V. Niagara is the first and only organization of its kind in Niagara County, providing housing exclusively for homeless and disabled Veterans and their families. S.E.R.V. Niagara also provides a uniquely structured program to support, employ, educate, empower, and promote healing, all of which foster the ultimate goals of self-sufficiency and keeping families together.

"Jennifer's ability to turn personal tragedy into something that has helped hundreds of other local residents get through their toughest times is remarkable and worthy of praise from all New Yorkers," said Sen. Ortt. "I know how difficult it can be when returning home from combat. Many of our soldiers do not come back the same person, and when they return home, life can be extremely challenging. Jennifer recognized this and has taken it upon herself to help as many returning service members as possible."

Jennifer presents all S.E.R.V. Niagara programming to the treatment courts and Veterans Courts and speaks on social issues such as substance abuse, domestic violence, and the effects on children and families. She works closely with law enforcement agencies, the Veterans Administration, Department of Social Services, and collaborates with various agencies and organizations. Since forming S.E.R.V. Niagara, Jennifer has shifted her area of practice in her career from personal injury to veteran and military issues and offers services pro bono to qualifying Veterans.

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