



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

## 7.25.19 - Senator Fred Akshar Honors Longtime Foster Parents in Hancock

FRED AKSHAR July 25, 2019

| ISSUE: **EVERYDAY HEROES, CELEBRATING COMMUNITY HEROES**



(HANCOCK, N.Y.) – Senator Fred Akshar joined over 30 community members, friends and family in Hancock to recognize two local residents who have devoted their lives to providing foster homes to children in need.

Gary and Sue Miller of Hancock, both age 64, have fostered over 100 children and adopted 12 in addition to raising two biological children of their own during their 42 years of marriage.

Originally from West Islip, Long Island, Gary and Sue moved to Pennsylvania before settling in Hancock, NY. After adding two parents, sixteen children and fourteen grandchildren to their family, the Miller family continues to grow. They are currently fostering one two-year-old and a five-year-old. Today, Gary continues to work multiple jobs to support his family, but remains involved in every aspect of his children and grandchildren's lives. Sue remains a full-time 24-hour stay at home mother and grandmother, handling the cooking, cleaning, laundry, doctor's appointments, school appointments, babysitting, taking care of all the animals, and so much more.

Senator Fred Akshar presented the Millers with a Senate Proclamation and a Senate Commendation plaque to commemorate their continued service and impact on children in need in the community.

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*"The Millers are everyday community heroes in the truest sense of the word," said Senator Fred Akshar. "They are extraordinary people who have made a lasting impact on so many children's lives, and it's my honor to recognize and thank them for their service on behalf of a grateful community."*

The recognition comes after several residents, including adopted daughter Jesamin "Jazzy" Miller, contacted Senator Akshar's office and shared the couple's story.

"I can honestly say that I would not be where I am today, if it was not for them," said Jesamin Miller. "At eight-months old, I was brought to my parents by a caseworker. I was taken out of my birth mother's house because she was an unfit mother. I was neglected to the point where the caseworkers said, 'this baby has no emotions, we don't think she will ever smile

again.' Almost twenty-two years later, I graduated from a Private University, where I was a walk-on Division 2 athlete and achieved a BBA in Finance. Now, I am pursuing a Master's degree in Information Systems and have a full-time job starting in September. You would never know that I am one of 16 kids with the opportunities my parents helped make possible for me. I am just one of a hundred-plus children that have come in and out of my parents' home. Some kids have stayed a night, weeks, months, years, and forever, but no matter the length of time they stayed, they were always treated like family the moment they came in the door."

"Gary and Sue are the first people to step up when they hear of anyone in need," said Brian Riter, an occupational therapist that's worked with the Miller family in Hancock for many years. "They provide food, supplies, and emotional support to all that know them. This family is a gift to our community. I can not imagine a more deserving family."

"It's a big surprise, it's very nice but we never did it for recognition," said Gary Miller. "After so many years with so many kids, we look back and we've been very blessed to have so many children."

"They've all been very successful and gone on to wonderful colleges," said Sue Miller. "After every child, we always said 'no more' but we're also Catholic and we feel it was all meant for a reason. How can you say 'No?'"