



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham Honors Outstanding Constituents to Mark Hispanic Heritage Month

PETE HARCKHAM October 10, 2019

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(Peekskill, NY) To mark Hispanic Heritage Month, Senator Pete Harckham, Senate District 40, honored Norma Pereira, co-founder of the Putnam Community Connection English as a Second Language program and Wilfredo Morel, Director of Hispanic Health at Hudson River Community Health in Peekskill, for their outstanding work to benefit the Hispanic community and the entire 40th Senate District. The event was held in Peekskill at Lunita's Restaurant and Coffee Shop.

"Both Norma Pereira and Wilfredo Morel have selflessly devoted their careers to improving the lives of immigrants and bridging the gap between the Hispanic and non-Hispanic communities in our towns, cities and villages," said Harckham. "Their efforts have helped countless Hispanic newcomers integrate more seamlessly into our communities and become engaged citizens."

Both award recipients are being honored for critical work they do with the immigrant community. Pereira, a Putnam County resident, works tirelessly to bring together newly arrived Hispanic immigrants and the existing communities in her county. In addition to her English as a Second Language program, she created the 'Spanish with Norma' program, that has opened lines of communication between English and Spanish speaking children and adults. She also founded "Damas en Acción" in which Spanish-speaking women meet to discuss issues ranging from health care and education to community, civics and political concerns.

Morel, along with his duties at Hudson River Community Health, has been instrumental in the developing and implementing a bi-national health alliance to help Mexican migrant farm workers. He has founded numerous Latino community groups in the Hudson Valley region that benefit immigrant communities and is on the Ending the Epidemic Taskforce, and chairs the Non-English Speaking Seasonal Migrant Farm Workers and New Immigrants Committee. In addition, Morel developed the Vida Latina program in which at-risk youth work with the arts to explore a whole child perspective to their health care access.

"Everything we achieve as a team in our community has marvelous results. I am blessed to have wonderful support from my family and colleagues. I appreciate each of you who has supported my efforts and encouraged me to continue my work," said Pereira. "Senator Harckham, thanks for such a meaningful recognition! 'Muchas Gracias' on behalf of the community in which I live, work and truly love. Together, Senator, we are making the

impossible, possible!"

Awardee Wilfredo Morel said, "I am honored to be chosen as a recipient of the 2019 Hispanic Heritage Month Senate Proclamation. As a community member in the city of Peekskill and the Hudson Valley region, I believe that servicing our diverse community is one of the best investments we can make in our lifetime. I am proud to make this commitment to society. I would like to personally thank Senator Harckham for his recognition of not only Hispanic Heritage month, but also of Latino leaders."