



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham Recognizes Brewster Schools Advocate Ann Marie Chalmers as a 2023 Woman of Distinction Honoree

PETE HARCKHAM May 22, 2023

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*Albany, NY* – New York State Senator Pete Harckham recognized Ann Marie Chalmers, a dedicated leader and community advocate for the Brewster Central School District (BCSD), SEIU Local 200 United union and local community for more than 20 years, as a 2023 State Senate Woman of Distinction honoree at a special ceremony held here in at the State Capitol.

“Ann Marie Chalmers has focused her entire career on helping others in the Brewster school community—and beyond,” said Harckham. “Through her lead-by-example attitude and tireless efforts, she has transcended her responsibilities to serve as an unofficial mentor, counselor and mediator to many

students, as well as an advocate for the schools' support staff. Ann Marie is truly a 'woman of distinction,' and I congratulate her on being honored as such."

Chalmers and her four siblings were raised in the Bronx by Irish immigrant, working-class parents. Following graduation from St. Barnabas High School, Mrs. Chalmers worked various jobs in healthcare, hospitality and transit.

In 1999, Chalmers, her husband, John, and their four children moved to Brewster. Mrs. Chalmers quickly became a community, church and public-school advocate. For over 10 years, Chalmers volunteered as president of the Parent-Teachers Association (PTA), as well as a catechism instructor and Teen Club advisor for the parish of St. Lawrence O'Toole Church in Brewster.

Chalmers began her career with BCSD in 2005 as a monitor, where her charismatic and engaging presence immediately impacted the students. Over her 18 years with the district, Chalmers has fulfilled many other roles at BCSD: chaperone, Performing Arts Liaison, and most recently as an assistant to the Athletics Director.

However, it is her "unofficial" roles that have made the most impact on the school community. Following the tragic death of a Brewster student in 2007, Chalmers organized a safe driving program to teach students about defensive driving. Since 2012, she has assisted in coordinating the "Mr. Brewster" competition, which has raised close to \$500,000 for Cystic Fibrosis research. For her unwavering dedication, Chalmers has been honored with the Christopher R Blackwell 9/11 Memorial Award 2013 and the 2015 Brewster Education Foundation Honoree Award; she was also celebrated as one of LoHud's "Unsung Heroes" of 2017.

In 2010, Chalmers became Vice Chair of SEIU Local 200United at Brewster. As a leader, she advocated for the rights of the support staff, ensured a safe school environment and most importantly, reinforced the necessity of support staff to the daily operations of the school district.

Brewster Central School District Superintendent Dr. Laurie Bandlow said, "The Brewster Community is so grateful for the dedication and spirit of Ann Marie Chalmers. She works every day for our students. We congratulate her on this prestigious award. It is well deserved."

Scott Phillipson, president of SEIU 200United President, said, "Ann Marie represents the best of what our union is made of. She's a fighter, through-and-through, and by fighting for what's right she has earned the respect of her peers. We are so glad to see the New York State Senate has acknowledged her."