

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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Senator Helming Announces Mari Potter is 2024 Woman of Distinction



Senator Pam Helming announced that small business owner Mari Potter has been named the 2024 Woman of Distinction for the 54th Senate District, as part of the New York State Senate Women of Distinction program.

Mari Potter, a resident of Clifton Springs, is the owner of 13 McDonald's restaurants in the Finger Lakes region along with her husband and business partner, Tim. McDonald's franchisees are the founding and forever partners of Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC), which helps families with children who are sick by keeping them together during treatment and providing essential resources. Mari serves on the RMHC of Rochester Board of Directors and is the Development Committee Chair. Her connection to RMHC is one of the most rewarding parts of being a McDonald's owner operator. Last year alone, Mari's restaurants raised over \$37,000 for RMHC of Rochester through their Round-Up for RMHC program.

Mari is embedded in the neighborhoods where she operates, not only by raising funds for many local nonprofit organizations, but also by providing employment and educational opportunities through Archways to Opportunity. This education and career advising program supports McDonald's employees in earning a high school diploma, taking English as a Second Language classes, and earning up to \$3,000 a year in college tuition assistance. In 2023, Mari's organization provided more than \$94,000 in tuition assistance to 50 local restaurant employees.

In 2022, Mari and Tim won the prestigious Ronald Award, which recognizes the top one percent of McDonald's owner operators across the country. Mari is the proud mother of five children and two stepchildren, and has seven grandchildren. Read her full bio [here](#).

Senator Helming said, "Mari Potter's commitment to the growth and vitality of our region is evident in how she runs her business, how she supports her employees, and how she gives back to the community. She is a leading female entrepreneur, one of only 10 women operators in McDonald's Empire region, from Buffalo to Albany. Beyond that, she is a champion for Ronald McDonald House Charities, raising money and awareness of the immeasurable support RMHC offers children and families during their most difficult times. Mari has a relentlessly positive attitude and an enduring devotion to the success of her employees and the communities they serve. This is especially true of the many young people who work their first job at McDonald's. It is my honor to recognize Mari as the 2024 Woman of Distinction for the 54th Senate District."

Mari Potter continues the legacy of her in-laws, Elmer and Sharon Potter, who opened their first McDonald's restaurant in the Rochester area in 1986. Her husband, Tim joined the family business after college and purchased two of his parents' restaurants. Mari and Tim subsequently purchased the family's remaining eight restaurants and expanded their business with three more, for a total of 13 McDonald's.

Mari Potter said, "I am both humbled and honored to receive this recognition by State Senator Pam Helming. It is my hope that through this recognition and my involvement with Ronald McDonald House Charities, that it will spark an interest in others to support this incredible charity. Be a hero to a family with a critically ill child, where seconds matter, by simply 'rounding up' when you place your next order at McDonald's."

Mari was recognized on Tuesday at the Women of Distinction ceremony in Albany.

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