

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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Senator Helming Announces Megan Freida as 2026 Woman of Distinction



Albany, New York – Senator Helming announced that Megan Freida, President of Embrace Your Sisters (EYS), has been named the 2026 Woman of Distinction for the 54th Senate District through the New York State Senate’s Women of Distinction program. Megan joins a distinguished group of past honorees from the 54th District, including Livingston County Emergency Medical Services Director Karen Dewar, entrepreneur Mari Potter, Wayne County Undersheriff Tammy Ryndock and community advocate Donna Schaertl—each of whom has made a lasting impact through their leadership and service.

Embrace Your Sisters is a nonprofit organization that is making a life-changing difference for individuals battling breast cancer by providing critical short-term emergency financial assistance and support when it is needed most.

For Megan, this work is deeply personal. Her mother is a two-time breast cancer survivor and witnessing that journey left a lasting impression that inspired her to help others facing the same challenges.

Today, Megan leads Embrace Your Sisters while balancing a full-time career at Wegmans. Under her leadership, the organization has continued to grow, powered by a dedicated network of volunteers committed to ensuring that people are met with compassion, dignity, and support during an incredibly difficult time.

What began as neighbors rallying around a single woman in need has grown into a respected 501(c)(3) organization serving individuals across a wide region of New York State. The mission is simple but powerful: when someone is fighting breast cancer, they should not have to face financial hardship alone.

Treatment often brings missed work, rising medical bills, and mounting household expenses. Embrace Your Sisters helps relieve that burden by providing emergency assistance for medical co-pays, treatment costs, rent or mortgage payments, utilities, and other essential bills, allowing individuals diagnosed with cancer and their families to focus on healing.

The organization serves residents across Allegany, Cayuga, Chemung, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne, and Yates counties. With the support of donors and volunteers, Embrace Your Sisters has provided more than \$700,000 in financial assistance and is celebrating their 20th anniversary this year.

Through her leadership, Megan has grown Embrace Your Sisters into a trusted resource across the region, ensuring that no one must face both a cancer diagnosis and financial hardship alone.

Senator Pam Helming said, “Every day across our communities, there are women quietly carrying a tremendous load, building careers, raising families, and still finding ways to show up for others. Megan Freida is one of those women. She has taken on the responsibility of leading a growing nonprofit, expanded its reach and impact, and continues to do it all while working a full-time job. Through Embrace Your Sisters, she has created a lifeline for individuals facing a breast cancer diagnosis and the families who stand beside them. Megan represents the kind of leadership that often goes unrecognized but is essential to the strength of our communities. I am proud to honor her as our 2026 Woman of Distinction representing the 54th District.”

Megan Freida, President, Embrace Your Sisters, said, “Being named a Woman of Distinction is deeply humbling. My journey has never been a solo one; every step has been shaped by working for an incredible company like Wegmans for 30 years and by serving alongside our amazing Board at Embrace Your Sisters. These are individuals who have encouraged me, challenged me, and believed in the work we do within the community. Whatever I’ve achieved comes from showing up, doing the work, and trying to make a difference in the lives around me. This honor reminds me that when we lead with purpose and compassion, we don’t just move ourselves forward, we lift our communities with us.”

Suane Lippman, Embrace Your Sisters, Vice President, adds, “Embrace Your Sisters is truly fortunate to have Megan Freida as our President. As the organization celebrates its 20th anniversary, Megan provides steadfast leadership that honors EYS’s longstanding mission to

provide emergency financial support to individuals in breast cancer treatment. Beyond preserving this vital legacy, she inspires the Board of Directors to think critically and creatively, ensuring the assistance program continues to expand and evolve. Her visionary approach and deep compassion make her a true Woman of Distinction.”

The New York State Senate Women of Distinction program honors one extraordinary woman from each Senate district whose volunteerism, service, and leadership make a meaningful difference, improve quality of life, and help shape and strengthen communities.

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