



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Steven D. Rhoads

## Senator Rhoads Collects Over 1,300 Pounds of Food During Inaugural Freedom Food Drive to Kick off the 4th of July Weekend in East Meadow Benefiting Long Island Neighbors in Need

STEVEN D. RHOADS July 13, 2023

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On Saturday, July 1 Senator Rhoads, volunteers, and East Meadow Boy Scouts joined at the Stop & Shop in East Meadow to host a Freedom Food Drive to help kick off the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend. Volunteers collected non-perishable items, baby essentials, toiletries and hygiene supplies, household items, and pet essentials. **The Senator's Inaugural Freedom Food Drive was a major success. In just four hours, there was a total of 1,378 pounds of food collected, along with \$361.50 worth of donations!** Everything that was collected at the Food Drive was donated to Island Harvest and given to Long Island family and friends in need.

Boy Scouts from Troop 362 in East Meadow also joined the Senator at the Food Drive. The dedicated volunteers donated their time to help eliminate hunger on Long Island. Approximately 221,000 people on Long Island suffer from food insecurity—including 65,000 children, and statewide, more than 2.2 million New Yorkers classify as food insecure. **Thanks to Senator Rhoads' efforts, the East Meadow community, and passionate volunteers, Island Harvest will be able to provide approximately 9,750 meals to our neighbors in need.**

Senator Rhoads was in awe of the heartwarming work being done at the Food Drive. “We chose this weekend because we’re celebrating our independence, and we count our blessings as Americans but you have to be cognizant of the fact that this isn’t a happy holiday for everyone,” **Senator Rhoads** said. “Food insecurity is a problem that exists year round, not just during Thanksgiving, not just during the holidays, and we thought this was the perfect time to kick off the holiday weekend with the chance to give back to those who are less fortunate.”

“Senator Steve Rhoads’ Freedom Food Drive in support of Island Harvest Food Bank was an incredible success,” said **Randi Shubin Dresner**, President & CEO of Island Harvest Food Bank. “Senator Rhoads understands that the unfortunate reality is food insecurity exists all year round. By hosting his Freedom Food Drive during the Independence Day holiday weekend, he collected more than 1,300 pounds of food with the help of our generous and supportive neighbors from around East Meadow.”

Senator Rhoads is grateful for everyone who came out to help with a great cause. He hopes that recognition for people with food insecurity increases and that we can continue to work towards our goal of ending food insecurity on Long Island.