



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Senator Young Invites Community to Fundraiser for Wounded Soldier

CATHARINE YOUNG September 2, 2009

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**ALBANY** – Expecting sunny skies and great weather, Senator Catharine Young (R,I,C – Olean) and Frank Higgins, event chairman, are encouraging community members and supporters to attend a special fundraiser on Friday for U.S. Army Specialist Brandon Rethmel, who was critically injured recently while serving abroad in Afghanistan.

“Brandon is a true hero who made tremendous sacrifices on our behalf. I know he and his wife Sylvia’s spirits continue to be lifted by all the encouragement and support they are receiving. The weather looks great for all the planned festivities and I urge the entire family to come out on Friday to lend their support,” said Sen. Young.

The benefit will be held at War Vets Park in Olean on Friday from 4-8 pm. Tickets for the event are \$15 and will include beer and soda along with food provided by Pecks Chicken BBQ. Tim Williams, head chef at the Bartlett Country Club, helped to recruit area chefs from Angee’s Restaurant, The Library, The Banquet Center, and Century Manor to help prepare the food.

“I have been incredibly impressed by the public support for this young man and his family and thrilled by all the efforts put forth by the City and community to help plan this worthwhile event,” said Frank Higgins.

Live music and entertainment will be provided by local musicians Andy Hannon, RJ Pauly, and Red Gray.

A raffle and a Chinese auction will also be offered including donated items such as Cutco Knives, lift passes at Holiday Valley, a Citizen’s Watch from Custom Creations Jewelry, a special U.S. Army leather jacket from Poor Cow Leathers, bottles of wine, gift certificates from local restaurants and businesses, and various other items.

Specialist Rethmel was deployed to Afghanistan on June 8<sup>th</sup> when only two weeks later his unit was attacked with a barrage of rockets by enemy forces. He was critically injured during the skirmish and lost a leg below his knee cap. One arm was severely mangled and he suffered extensive wounds to his abdomen.

Last month, Senator Young traveled to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. to present Brandon with the Conspicuous Service Cross - New York State's highest military honor. Specialist Rethmel is expected to be in therapy at Walter Reed for the better part of a year.

During his military career, Specialist Rethmel has received two Army Achievement Medals, a Sharpshooter Badge and an assortment of other awards. He was also awarded the Purple Heart for his wounds received during the Afghanistan battle.

Specialist Rethmel and his wife Sylvia, who first met while attending Olean High School together, were married in 2006. The couple has a baby girl, Mariah.

“I think this is so wonderful and we are grateful that the Senator and everyone in the community has been so willing to help us out,” said Sylvia Rethmel, Brandon’s wife. “I thank everyone for all their support and all that they are doing.”

Tickets for Friday’s benefit can be purchased at the gate or picked up at Senator Young’s office at 700 W. State Street in Olean. All proceeds from the fundraiser will go to the Brandon Rethmel Fund. Additional information can be found by contacting Senator Young’s office at: 716-372-4901.

Checks may be made payable to the Brandon Rethmel Fund, c/o Community Bank, 201 N. Union St., Olean, NY 14760

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