



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

Alzheimer's Association Expands Medic-Alert + Safe Return Program

JEFFREY D. KLEIN April 29, 2010

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Senator Klein presents \$25,000 grant to Alzheimer's Association NYC

NEW YORK, NY - Deputy Majority Leader State Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) presented a \$25,000 grant to Alzheimer's Association NYC's Bronx Chapter on Thursday at the Providence Rest Nursing Home in the Bronx.

The money will be used to expand the Alzheimer's Association MedicAlert® + Safe Return® program in the Bronx. The program is a 24-hour nationwide emergency response service for individuals with Alzheimer's or related dementia who wander or have a medical emergency.

According to Alzheimer's Association NYC, nearly 14,000 New York City residents currently participate in the MedicAlert® + Safe Return® program, about 2,500 of them live in the Bronx. In the past year alone, Alzheimer's Association NYC enrolled approximately 500 new Bronx residents, an 82% increase from the previous year. During that same period, 37 Bronx residents who went missing were found.

Estimates are that nearly sixty percent of individuals with Alzheimer's or related dementia will wander at some point and if not found within 24 hours have a 50% chance of being seriously injured or never located. According to Alzheimer's Association NYC, the MedicAlert® + Safe Return® program has a 100% success rate in the area. Since 1993, the Safe Return program (now called MedicAlert® + Safe Return®) has provided bracelets or necklaces for people with Alzheimer's or related dementia that indicate the person is memory impaired and include a 24-hour crisis number to call. When people register for the program, their information is entered into a database, making it easy to identify a person who is found wandering.

Alzheimer's Association NYC's Bronx chapter will use Klein's grant to further educate families about the MedicAlert® + Safe Return® program as well as other programs within the association.

"Alzheimer's disease already creates a stressful, challenging and heartbreaking situation for victims and their families. As we fight to find a permanent treatment for this debilitating disease, we must support programs such as MedicAlert® + Safe Return® that help victims and their loved ones survive the day-to-day obstacles," said Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester).

“The Alzheimer's Association, New York City Chapter is very grateful to Senator Jeffrey Klein for funding our MedicAlert® + Safe Return® Outreach and Awareness Program. Senator Klein's leadership will help Bronx families protect relatives with Alzheimer's and related dementia by providing a heightened level of safety and security for these most vulnerable individuals as well as for those who love them and the community,” said Jed Levine, Executive Vice President of the Alzheimer's Association, NYC Chapter.

“My family owes a deep debt of gratitude to so many people who made sure that my sister, Norma, got home safely. Thank you to Senator Klein for funding Safe Return; to the New York City Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association for administering a program that really saves lives; to the kind and generous good Samaritans who took my sister into the safety of their home; and to the NYPD. You are all heroes,” said Nellie Evans whose sister was recently found in the Bronx through the Medic-Alert Safe Return program after wandering from her apartment in Manhattan.

“The Safe Return and Medic Alert Program comes at a very crucial time. As our baby boomers age, the number of people in the general population afflicted with Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia will increase exponentially. At the same time the amount of money available to deal with the problem is decreasing. As a result current legislation at the state and federal levels is aimed at keeping people in the community to age in place with services, as opposed to long term care which is the more costly alternative This program is an effective response, both in cost and quality, to keep our wanderers safe from harm today and tomorrow. Senator Klein was certainly thinking ahead when he secured this grant for the Alzheimer's Association,” said Susan Steinberg, Assistant Administrator of Providence Rest Nursing Home.

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