



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

Senator Malcolm A. Smith Holds 11th Annual Valentine's Day Program

MALCOLM A. SMITH February 16, 2011

| ISSUE: **VETERANS**

There are 24 million veterans living in the United States.

(**St. Albans**) -New York State Senator Malcolm A. Smith held his 11th Annual Send-A-Vet-A-Valentine event at the St. Albans Community Living Center and the New York State Veterans Home at St. Albans.

“The gift distribution program is my way to honor veterans who have served our beloved nation in the military services and are hospitalized at local veteran facilities,” said Senator Smith.

Smith distributed over 200 goodie bags filled with socks, blankets and assorted toiletries. All items were donated to Smith's office by Health First, Jet Blue and Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 32.

Tom Corbin, of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 32, said “We work in conjunction with Senator Malcolm Smith's office to do this every year. We find this is a very rewarding opportunity to come out to the nursing home and hospital and to thank the veterans. This is a little show of our appreciation.”

Veteran Larry McKelton said “For the past two years that I have been living here at the veteran’s home I have received a goodie bag on Valentine’s Day from Senator Smith. It really makes me feel good. I think it makes all of us feel good.”

Most of the patients in the facilities have served in either the WWII, the Korean or Vietnam War. Patients at these facilities are there as a result of a service-related injury and some were also homeless.

There are approximately 179 Veterans living at the St. Albans Community Living Center which is part of VA New York Harbor Health Care System. More than 200 Veterans live at New York State Veterans Home at St. Albans. In addition there are 24 Million veterans living in the United States. One of the most pressing issues facing veterans today are the skyrocketing rates of mental health injuries. About one in five Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are experiencing symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or depression.

“Veterans have endured a lot and deserve to be honored and appreciated,” Smith concluded.

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Malcolm A. Smith is the New York State Senate Immediate Past President Pro Tempore (2008-10). He currently serves as Secretary of the NYS Democratic Conference and ranking member on the Banking Committee.