



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## MENORAH STOLEN FROM PLEASANT PLAINS PLAZA - Senator Andrew Lanza Replaces Menorah & Offers \$500 Reward for Information Leading to Arrest of Perpetrator(s)

ANDREW J LANZA December 7, 2011

Staten Island, NY, December 7, 2011: The Pleasant Plains, Prince's Bay, Richmond Valley Civic Association, hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Christmas Tree and Menorah Lighting on Sunday, December 4, 2011 at 4:30 p.m. at the Pleasant Plains Plaza, located at the intersection of Pleasant Plains Ave and Amboy Road.

The event featured singing by Pastor Mercaldo and Gabi Mercaldo from Cathedral at the Gateway, the Tottenville High School Women's Chorus, dancing from Next Step Dance Studio and readings by Father Gill from St. Joseph St. Thomas, and by Jason Galak on the meaning of Christmas and Hanukah. Over 120 people attended the community event.

On Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at approximately 3:30 p.m., Janine Materna, President of the Civic Association, drove by the site and noticed that the menorah was missing. After observing the area, she noticed that the string that secured the Menorah was cut, and a piece of the stand on which the Menorah was sitting was near the sewer. She immediately realized that this was an act of vandalism. A local resident whose home is located directly across the street from where the site exists told Ms. Materna that she found the stand on which the Menorah was standing on by the sewer, and noticed that the Menorah was missing. She expressed her disappointment in regards to this act of vandalism.

Ms. Materna called the 123 precinct to report the incident. The NYPD arrived and filed a report. Ms. Materna said, "I, along with many of my fellow Staten Islanders, am outraged over this hateful and disgraceful crime. Good, caring, hard working people came together on Sunday to celebrate the holiday season as one community. For a symbol of the Jewish faith (or any faith) to be stolen from this site and the people of this community to be so recklessly disrespected both saddens and angers me. Shame on them! The Menorah will be replaced as soon as possible and the holiday spirit in this community will not be swayed in the slightest. We are better than that!" Senator Andrew Lanza has purchased an exact replica of the Menorah so that it can be returned to its rightful place next to the Christmas tree in Pleasant Plains Park. Lanza is also offering a \$500 reward for information leading to the arrest of the perpetrator(s) responsible for this crime. Lanza said, "This is a hateful act and is especially reprehensible during the holiday season. This is not what Staten Island is about. Especially around the holidays, neighbors should be able to celebrate their culture, faith and community without interference from a few thugs. While this act is not representative of what Staten Island is all about, it is important that we send a strong message that we will not tolerate acts of hate or crime, which is why I am offering a \$500 reward

to help ensure that the perpetrator(s) are brought to justice.”

“I was truly saddened to learn about the cowardly act of vandalism at the Pleasant Plains Plaza, which intentionally targeted part of our community’s holiday celebration,” said Assemblyman Lou Tobacco (R,I,C-Staten Island). “I am joining with Senator Lanza in offering a reward for the apprehension of the individual or individuals who committed this crime to demonstrate that Staten Island will never tolerate these illegal acts.”

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