



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Senator Kennedy Announces Buffalo Sabres to Bring Street Hockey Program to Lackawanna Youth

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY June 10, 2012

| ISSUE: **FAMILIES, RECREATION AND TOURISM, CHILDREN, YOUTH**



Sabres Street program in Lackawanna launched as part of Mount Olive Church's Youth Day 2012

LACKAWANNA, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy announced the Buffalo Sabres are bringing their Sabres Street mobile hockey program to the streets of Lackawanna this summer.

Sabres Street Lackawanna kicked-off Sunday at Mt. Olive Baptist Church with games and

giveaways for local children. The full program launches Monday, June 11, at 4:30 p.m. in the church parking lot, 66 Wasson Ave. Local youth, ages 6 to 15, are invited to participate.

The Sabres Street program focuses on fostering hockey skills and sportsmanship among young Western New Yorkers. The 90-minute program features 45 minutes of instruction from members of the Buffalo Sabres Alumni. Instruction focuses on teaching basic hockey skills, including stick handling, passing and shooting. Participating youth then team up and play a game for the last 45 minutes of the program.

The Sabres plan to offer this program multiple times throughout the summer at Mount Olive Church. Local children – from Lackawanna and other neighboring communities – are encouraged to participate each time it's offered.

Senator Kennedy brought together Sabres' officials and the leadership at Mount Olive Church to help launch this new partnership that will focus on engaging Lackawanna youth in opportunities to learn hockey skills and improve physical fitness.

"This is a great way for us to reach out to our community," said Cliff Benson, chief development officer for the Buffalo Sabres. "When we say Buffalo is a hockey town, we're talking about all of Western New York, especially Lackawanna. We're always looking for ways to grow the sport in our community, and the Sabres Street program is one more way we're bringing hockey to Western New Yorkers. This program will give even more people the opportunity to play a sport that they love."

"A lot of children at Mount Olive Church and throughout Lackawanna grow up watching and admiring the Sabres, but many of them don't get the chance to lace up skates and try the sport on the ice – or even grab a hockey stick and try street hockey," said Rev. Dion Watkins, pastor of Mount Olive Baptist Church. "Whether it's the cost or other extenuating

circumstances, the Sabres Street program removes barriers preventing kids from giving hockey a try and learning new skills. I'm excited for this new opportunity to help Lackawanna children learn hockey and keep out of trouble, and I look forward to continuing to work with the Buffalo Sabres to help improve our community. I want to thank the Sabres for partnering with us and Senator Kennedy for helping us build this relationship."

"I'm thrilled the Buffalo Sabres have teamed up with Mount Olive Church to bring Lackawanna youth this exciting new opportunity to learn hockey skills from some of the best to have ever played the sport," said Senator Kennedy. "Children and young people need opportunities like this to get involved in healthy, fulfilling activities to remain active and stay out of trouble. Improving our community's quality of life requires cooperative and collaborative partnerships that unite various stakeholders working together toward the collective goal of a stronger Western New York. That's what the Sabres Street hockey program and this partnership with Mt. Olive Church are all about."

A long-term goal of the partnership between the Buffalo Sabres and Mount Olive Church is getting more young people involved in hockey early in their lives. With this in mind, more ideas are being explored and initiated to offer further hockey program opportunities in Lackawanna.

###

Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate's 58th District, which is comprised of the towns of Cheektowaga, Eden, Hamburg and West Seneca, the city of Lackawanna and the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.