



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

Senator LaValle Names Rocky Point's Meredith Festa a Woman of Distinction; Statewide Capitol Fete May 7

KENNETH P. LAVALLE April 25, 2013



Rocky Point's Meredith Festa has been selected by New York State Senator Kenneth P. LaValle as the First Senatorial District's Woman of Distinction for 2013.

Meredith is a passionate and committed animal rescue volunteer who routinely pulls animals out of harm's way and has spearheaded a program – Guardians of Rescue -- and continuing with Paws Unite People – to work with elementary and high school students to get them involved in animal rescue. Meredith has arranged for foster homes for special needs animals and gotten dogs trained and rehabilitated.

Meredith single handedly established a relationship with a shelter in Afghanistan and raised the money to bring 12 dogs to the United States who were living on military bases as strays. Meredith successfully found homes for each dog here in the States with either the soldiers they lived with in Afghanistan or retired military personnel who served in Afghanistan.

She is a one-woman animal rescue organization according to fellow volunteers.

Meredith does all of her volunteer rescue activities while holding her day job as a bank branch manager in Port Jefferson, and while remaining actively committed to helping develop Port Jefferson Village. Meredith regularly attends economic development council meetings to find new ways to grow business in the Village of Port Jefferson. Meredith hosts events and fairs promoting local animal rescues and artists.

"I am proud," Senator LaValle said, "to honor Meredith Festa as this year's Woman of Distinction for her tireless work, volunteerism and commitment to her chosen cause; animal rescue. Meredith's name will join those of other women in New York State who are deserving of special recognition." Meredith will receive the award at a May 7 reception in Albany with women from across New York State.

LaValle noted that the Senate's "Women of Distinction" program was created in 1998 to honor New York women who exemplify personal excellence or whose professional achievements or acts of courage, selflessness, integrity or perseverance serve as an example to all New Yorkers. Women from the worlds of business, academics, and civic life, as well as those who have performed heroic or selfless acts, made significant discoveries, or provided examples of personal excellence against difficult odds have been honored at the annual event.