



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Press Release: Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins Recognizes 12-Year-Old Jake Gallin of New Rochelle for His Initiative to Honor Military Families This Veterans Day

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS November 10, 2014

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New Rochelle, NY - State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, the Democratic Conference Leader, used the phone to connect via the school's public address system, to make a special announcement to students at the Albert Leonard Middle School in New Rochelle in honor of Veterans Day, and gave 12-year-old Jake Gallin a Certificate of Recognition for his "Stars for Cars" initiative to assist and recognize military families.

Introduced by Principal John Barnes, Senator Stewart-Cousins read the following statement with Jake by her side. "In honor of Veterans Day tomorrow, we take this time to remember our 'Blue and Gold Star' military families and thank them for their sacrifice, generosity, and we want them to know that we are part of their community." The Senator then thanked Jake for his efforts and thanked the students for listening.

The announcement itself was created by Jake Gallin, who is now a 7th Grader. Jake was inspired to do something to recognize military families and their sacrifices after seeing First Lady Michelle Obama and Second Lady Dr. Jill Biden on a talk show in 2011 when he was 8 years old. The First Lady said 1% of our population is protecting 99% of us, and he took it to heart. Jake decided he wanted to do something in his community to recognize Blue and Gold Star Families. A Blue Star family has a loved one serving in the military; a Gold Star family has lost a family member who was serving. He began with his "Stars for Cars" website three years ago, and has expanded his efforts to have schools across the state make announcements three times a year, on Veterans Day (November 11th), Memorial Day (the last Monday in May) and Patriot Day (September 11th) to recognize Blue and Gold Star families.

Jake wrote to Senator Stewart-Cousins this summer, telling her about his letter writing campaign to get all schools in New York State to make similar announcements. So far, about 45 have agreed to do so, including Hastings-on-Hudson. Jake also sells car magnets on his "Stars for Cars" website, <http://www.starsforcars.org/>, with the proceeds going to the USO (United Service Organization). He's been recognized as an official fundraiser for the USO. Jake also is supported by Volunteer New York, which provides volunteer opportunities for young people.

Said Senator Stewart-Cousins, "As we mark Veterans Day on Tuesday, when we as a nation pause to remember and thank the veterans who have served our country, it is heartening to see that the next generation also realizes the sacrifices made by their families, in the defense

of our country and freedom. Jake Gallin is an inspiration. He realized he could make a difference.”