



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## Senator Klein Hosts 20th Annual “Valentines for Veterans”

JEFFREY D. KLEIN February 13, 2015

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*Klein Donates More Than 200 Valentine's Day Cards and Gift Bags to Bronx Veterans*

**BRONX, NY – State Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester)**, joined by Miss USA 2014 Nia Sanchez, Miss Teen USA K. Lee Graham and students from P.S. 83, today donated more than 200 Valentine's Day Cards and gift bags to veterans at the 20<sup>th</sup> annual "Valentines for Veterans" celebration held at the James J. Peters VA Medical Center.

"For more than 20 years, I have proudly hosted 'Valentines for Vets' as a way to honor and support our local American heroes. This special event, coinciding with the National Salute to Veterans, is a way to give back to all those who have given us so much -- those who have fought for our freedom and our democracy," **said Senator Klein.** "Today, I salute our men and women in uniform and I thank everyone for coming out and showing their appreciation, including P.S. 83, the Bronx schools who prepared and donated gift bags, Miss USA and Miss Teen USA."

"The National Salute to Veteran Patients gives everyone a chance to let our veterans know just how very much they are appreciated. Our medical center's 464 volunteers are an important part of our healthcare team and donate over 85,000 hours of their precious time to our veterans. The National Salute program is a great way for people to learn more about helping the veterans we serve," **said James J. Peters VA Medical Center Medical Director, Dr. Erik Langhoff.**

The event featured a performance by the P.S. 83 school choir, a special dedication to our men and women in uniform and local veterans from the surrounding community. After the program, Senator Klein, Miss USA, Miss Teen USA and children from P.S. 83 distributed Valentine's Day cards and gift bags prepared by more than 25 schools across the Bronx to residents. Donations items included stationery, pens and pencils, playing cards, stamps, handkerchiefs, soap and more. "Being involved in 'Valentines for Vets' during my year as Miss USA is an honor not only because I get to show my appreciation to the men and women that served our country, but also because I come from a military background," **said Nia Sanchez, Miss USA 2014.** "Both my Grandfather and Father served in the military and it was an extremely influential part of my upbringing. What a wonderful way to celebrate Valentine's Day!"

"Valentines for Veterans" is held during the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans, a weeklong celebration commemorating the more than 98,000 men and women who have

served in the U.S. Armed Services and are now cared for by the Department of Veterans Affairs in hospitals, outpatient clinics, and nursing homes across the U.S. The National Salute seeks to spread awareness and appreciation for veterans by encouraging citizens to visit hospitalized veterans in their communities.