



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Carl L. Marcellino

Karen Acompora

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Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

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Award: HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Year: 2013

Karen Acompora's life changed forever when her 14-year-old son, Louis, passed away during his high school lacrosse game. Though devastated, she channeled her grief and turned it into something that would help others.

Louis Acompora was a high school freshman lacrosse goalie for Northport High School. In his first high school game on March 25, 2000, he blocked what appeared to be a routine shot with his chest protector. He took a few steps and collapsed on the field. After several minutes of unsuccessful revival attempts, he passed away from a blunt impact trauma to the chest during a critical cycle in the heart's rhythm – a syndrome known as Commotio Cordis. To this date, no known chest protector is available on the market to prevent this tragedy from occurring.

Grief stricken but committed to helping prevent another family from experiencing this tragedy, Ms. Acompora started a grassroots campaign to raise awareness among schools and other public institutions concerning the importance of establishing Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) programs in schools. She also co-founded the Louis J. Acompora Memorial Foundation. The Foundation is committed to seeing an improvement in sports safety with a special focus on the placement of AEDs in all schools, public venues and youth athletic organizations.

Because of her diligence and unwavering commitment, New York passed the "Louis Law" which ensures that all public New York State schools have an AED program. Fifty-seven lives have been saved thus far in the New York State school system because of this law. The Foundation also provides grants for AED programs and training courses.

Ms. Acompora's work far extends beyond her Northport community. The Foundation has increased its efforts on raising AED awareness to the rest of the country and Canada. Her efforts have resulted in AED programs being implemented, along with legislative action taken, in several states.

Ms. Acompora's positive impact resonates through the organizations in which she serves and the lives she touches. She gives her time and talents to several national organizations, including Parent Heart Watch, the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association, the American Heart Association's New York State Advocacy Committee. She is a CPR/AED Instructor and a volunteer for the American Heart Association and is an Honorary Board Member for the Nassau County PAL.

The great State of New York has been built on the perseverance, dedication and commitment of its citizens. Ms. Acompora knows and possesses these traits as she continues to honor her son's memory by fighting to save more lives.