



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR  
Kenneth P. LaValle

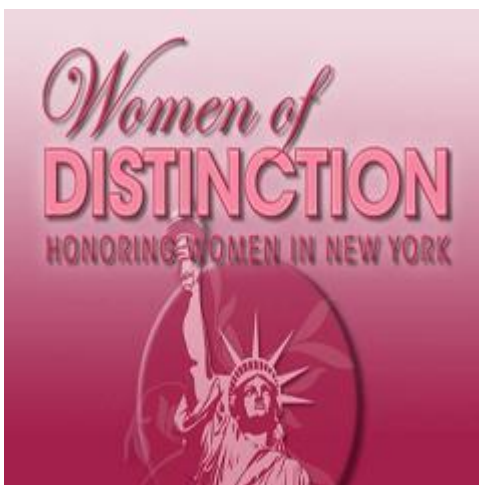
## Meredith Festa

KENNETH P. LAVALLE May 13, 2013



*Women of*  
**DISTINCTION**  
HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

*Meredith Festa*



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**Award:** HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

**Year:** 2013

Meredith Festa, an enthusiastic pet owner, found her true vocation through her love of dogs. Perpetually showing where there is a will, there is a way, she set out to protect our canine friends and has made a difference both in the United States and internationally.

An avid dog lover, Ms. Festa could not ignore the number of abused or stray dogs with nowhere to call home. Little by little, she began doing animal rescue. What started off as a small scale effort, took off when she joined Guardians of Rescue. She was the only woman willing to go on rescue calls, in really rough areas, to pull animals out of harm's way and get them to safety.

Not one to shy away from a challenge, Ms. Festa spearheaded a new program with Guardians of Rescue, to work with elementary and high school students and get them involved in animal rescue. She secured foster homes for special needs animals and arranged for other dogs to be trained and rehabilitated.

One of her greatest accomplishments is being responsible for single handedly establishing a relationship with a shelter in Afghanistan, Nowzad, where she raised enough money to bring 12 dogs to the United States who were living on military bases as strays. She successfully re-homed each and every one of those dogs in the states, with either the soldiers they lived with in Afghanistan or retired military personnel who served in Afghanistan.

It took supreme passion and confidence to start, oversee and complete that Afghanistan dog project, but Ms. Festa has proved she is no ordinary woman. To a large degree, she was a one woman animal rescue organization. She accomplished all of this while working a full time job and while remaining actively committed to further the development of Port Jefferson Village.

In addition to her animal rescue efforts, Ms. Festa regularly attends economic development council meetings to find new ways to build up business for shop keepers in the Village. She hosts events and fairs promoting local animal rescues and artists. She takes care of the town she's worked in for so many years and the locals adore her for it.

She is known in her community as “your biggest champion, your biggest defender and biggest advocate.” For all she has done and continues to do, Ms. Festa is truly an inspirational woman of distinction.