



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## Team Sanders Conducts Idlewild Park Cleanup in Recognition of MLK Day

JAMES SANDERS JR. January 18, 2016



The office of State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village) joined community members and the Parks Department for a cleanup of Idlewild Park Preserve in recognition of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a national day of service. Some 74 people participated in the three-hour long event which began at 230th Street and 149th Avenue and extended to several areas of the 340-acre salt marsh.

“It is fitting that on this day when we pause to recognize the life and accomplishments of the

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., that we also do our part to give back to the community,” Sanders said. “As Dr. King famously said: ‘Life’s most persistent question is: What are you doing for others,’ and that’s something we should all be asking ourselves today. This is not a day off, but a day on.”

Armed with work gloves, shovels, metal grabbers, wheel barrows and garbage bags, all provided by the Parks Department, the crew got to work removing garbage and other debris which included items such as: luggage, diapers, a bicycle, concrete blocks, glass bottles, soda cans, tires, car parts, Styrofoam, a Christmas tree and a traffic cone. Large bundles of uprooted Phragmites, an invasive plant that typically grows around salt marshes, were also taken away. More than 60 cubic yards of trash was removed, according to a Parks Department representative.

To combat the freezing weather, volunteers took occasional breaks from their work and warmed up at the Idlewild Park Preserve Environmental Science Learning Center, located in a trailer within the park, where complimentary coffee, tea, hot chocolate and cookies were provided. Barbara Brown, who runs the center and is also chairperson of the Eastern Queens Alliance, thanked the participants for their hard work.

“Idlewild Park is an important ecological resource for everyone, not just those in Southeast Queens,” Brown said. “Over the years there has been a lot of illegal dumping, so to have all these people here helping is wonderful, because it’s not something just one person or one organization can do. Martin Luther King Jr. encouraged people to serve their communities so this is a wonderful tribute to his memory.”