



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## Hundreds Attend Sanders' Parade to Honor Olympic Gold Medal Track Star

JAMES SANDERS JR. September 12, 2016



State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village, Far Rockaway) yesterday held a parade and celebration to welcome home 2016 Olympic Gold Medal Winner, Dalilah Muhammad, the first American woman to claim that honor for the 400-meter hurdle. Hundreds of people lined the streets to watch the festivities and get a glimpse of Muhammad, who grew up in Rochdale Village.

“I am proud that Olympic track star and gold medal winner Dalilah Muhammad is a resident

of my district,” Sanders said. “She is a shining example of what can be accomplished through hard work and dedication. Dalilah is an inspiration to us all, especially our youth.”

The event was co-sponsored by Assembly Member Vivian Cook, the Rochdale Village Board of Directors and Hope NYC Church in South Ozone Park. Other participants included the Elite Marching Band of Queens, Novas Track Club, Elite Limousine, Benjamin Auto Sales and White Castle.

Sanders challenged Muhammad to a race at the running track in Roy Wilkins Park, where she began training for her successful athletic career under the tutelage of coaches such as George Taylor of the NOVAS Track Club. Sanders lost his racing challenge to Muhammad even though he said prior to the race he was convinced he would leave her in the dust, however it was Muhammad who left Sanders in the dust and as per their agreement, Sanders had to provide hamburgers to all of the attendees at event.

Following the race, as Muhammad walked the same path where she started and reminisced about her early days. There, she also took pictures with fans, including many youth.

“I was just 7 years old when I joined the track team, Muhammad said. “I was just a little girl running around Rochdale.”

The parade, which included floats as well as live music provided by a marching band, proceeded from Roy Wilkins Park, down Merrick Boulevard towards Bedell Street and ended at 137th Avenue in Rochdale Village, the co-op complex where Dalilah Muhammad grew up,

During the parade Muhammad stood atop a float encircled by a gold crown, where she and her parents as well as Sanders waved to the crowd. Once at Rochdale Village, the celebration

continued with public officials, Rochdale Village board members and community residents giving their greetings and awards. Sanders presented Muhammad with a proclamation.

During her speech at the conclusion of the celebration, Muhammad thanked her parents and the community for their support. She also encouraged other young people to follow their dreams. She said she started by setting small goals and slowly expanding her accomplishments.

“It didn’t just happen overnight,” Muhammad said. “It was hard work and dedication. It takes determination to ultimately be the best.”