



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Addabbo Praises Young Constituent for Anti-Bullying Project

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR. October 13, 2016



Howard Beach, NY (October 13, 2016) In an continuing effort to raise awareness of bullying in our schools, Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. was recently impressed with a local 8th grader who runs an anti-bully club in his school.

Sam Verstandig, a student at Yeshiva of Central Queens, recently met with Addabbo at the Senator's mobile office hours held at the Forest Hills Library to discuss the school's Mix It Up club, of which Sam is president. The group aims to teach children how to be tolerant of others and embrace their differences, rather than put each other down through bullying and

mean behavior. The club also focuses on teaching students how to react if they see others being picked on.

“We could all learn a lot from Sam and the message he is spreading through the Mix It Up club,” said Addabbo. “With a little more tolerance and understanding from all of us, our world could be a much more peaceful place, but perhaps the most important environment to teach this concept is in our schools. Too often, we see young lives lost far too soon due to bullying, and with the advancements in technology, our kids are now more vulnerable to experience mean and unfriendly behavior than ever before. As the father of two young girls, I understand the importance of teaching children to celebrate each other’s difference rather than criticize them.

During his meeting with the Senator, Sam shared details about some of the club’s outreach efforts, including a Mix It Up at Lunch Day where students are encouraged to sit with other students at lunch instead of their normal group of friends. Sam organized ice breakers to help his classmates get to know each other, and the students also held a moment of silence for all the children who have lost their lives as a result of bullying.

In the few years since it was started at Yeshiva of Central Queens, the club has become so popular at the school that it no longer has the space or resources to accommodate all the students who wish to join. Sam has arranged a schedule and a budget for fundraising and other outreach events throughout the remainder of this school year that he plans to work on with his teachers and classmates.

“I am so proud to see not only the dedication Sam has put into building this club, but also the immense amount of interest that his classmates have in joining and helping to spread the message about how harmful bullying can really be,” Addabbo said. “I encourage all students to get behind this meaningful cause and look forward to seeing Sam’s project grow to be

even bigger.”

Those who wish to find out more information about the Mix It Up club at Yeshiva or Central Queens should visit <http://ycqmixitup.weebly.com/>.