



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Chris Jacobs

## Jacobs Honors Nicole Dayka With NYS Women of Distinction Award

SENATOR JACOBS May 31, 2019

| ISSUE: NYS WOMEN OF DISTINCTION, HONORING WOMEN



(Buffalo, NY) – New York State Senator Chris Jacobs (60th SD) announced that Hamburg resident Nicole Dayka is the 2019 New York State Women of Distinction recipient for the 60<sup>th</sup> Senate District. Dayka is Youth at Risk Coordinator for the Town of Hamburg and the Hamburg Central School District, as well as a long-time volunteer at Oishei Children's Hospital.

At a ceremony marking the announcement, Jacobs praised Dayka for a lifetime of professional service, volunteerism and advocacy that has touched the lives of countless children and families in the Town of Hamburg and across Western New York.

“As Hamburg’s Youth at Risk Coordinator Nicole has been a source of strength guidance and hope for so many children and families in her community, and has been instrumental in the Hamburg School District being recognized as one of the most innovative in the country for its support of students with mental health issues,” said Senator Jacobs. “When adversity faced her own life and family, those challenges inspired her to an outstanding level of volunteer service providing aid and comfort to others in need. She is a truly deserving recipient of this great honor.”

Established in 1998, the Women of Distinction program was created to recognize the historic contributions of New York women who exemplify personal excellence, courage, selflessness, integrity and perseverance, and serve as an example to all New Yorkers.

Dayka has worn many hats through her service to Hamburg’s town and school district, including Co-President of the Parent Child Connection, Coordinator of the Hamburg Youth Court and Chair of the Special Education PTA for Hamburg Schools.

“Nicole Dayka is a dynamic woman who has been instrumental in expanding and enhancing our Youth Bureau programs,” said Marty Denecke, Director of Youth, Recreation & Senior Services for the Town of Hamburg. “Nicole is a tireless, enthusiastic and skillful employee who is fully engaged in our community. We are very fortunate to have her on our team.”

“While Nicole is an incredible resource for our school district staff, one of the most striking elements of the service she provides to the families of our community is the humility with which she offers it,” said Hamburg Central Schools Superintendent Michael Cornell. “She

seeks no recognition, and, in fact, purposely avoids it. Instead she prefers to focus only on their needs, making her even more deserving of this great honor.”

In addition to her professional contributions, Nicole also serves on the Erie County Opioid Epidemic Task Force and the Rapid Evaluation Appropriate Placement (REAP) subcommittee, where she uses her experience as a mental health trainer to help combat the opioid crisis. The Vice-President of the Town of Hamburg Drug Free Community Coalition, Nicole runs the Helping Others Peacefully Endure (HOPE) support group for families that have lost loved ones due to addiction. Her extensive volunteer service includes coordinating the travel fund for the Holiday Partnership for the Southtown’s Families, serving as a board member of Colton’s Journey to Liberation and her volunteer work at St. Bernadette’s Parish.

Motivated by her son Carson’s experience with chronic illness, some of Nicole’s most impactful work in the community stems from her membership on the Family Advisory Council and the depth of her volunteer work at Oishei Children’s Hospital (OCH). She helped create the Carson Dayka Travel Fund, which supports Ronald McDonald house and patients and families travelling from out of town or to OCH for treatment. One very rewarding aspect of her volunteer work at OCH has been her long association with Stone’s Buddies, a program that supports families coping with chronic and life-threatening illness.

“Nicole has been a longtime friend and advocate of Oishei Children’s Hospital who works tirelessly to help parents and families navigate their child’s chronic and complex illnesses and the uncertainty and anxiety it brings, said Allegra Jaros, President at Oishei Children’s Hospital. “Her selfless dedication to helping others is what makes her a bright light at Oishei Children’s Hospital and throughout our community. It is an honor to be part of celebrating Nicole as this year’s NYS Woman of Distinction.”