



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham Helps Kickoff New York Milk Bank's Motorcycle Breast Milk Caravan

PETE HARCKHAM September 17, 2019

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**(Peekskill, NY)** When babies in New York State are in need of donor breast milk, the lifesaving nourishment can be obtained from The New York Milk Bank, which provides safe, pasteurized breast milk and distributes it to families and hospitals. On Saturday morning, at its Valhalla headquarters, the organization kicked off its two-day Milk Caravan to Buffalo, to raise awareness among parents unable to produce enough breast milk for their babies and, potential breast milk donors. Senator Pete Harckham, chair of the Senate Committee on

Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, joined The New York Milk Bank at the kickoff site and presented Executive Director Julie Bouchet-Horwitz, with a proclamation honoring their outstanding, lifesaving service. The Senator learned of their work when he toured St. Michael's Hospital in Buffalo on a recent opioid prevention fact finding tour. The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) staff at St. Michael's weans babies born dependent on opioids off of the drugs, often feeding them donor breast milk to maintain the appropriate nutrition so they have the best outcomes.

The Sirens Women's Motorcycle Club of NYC is leading the initial leg of the Milk Caravan to Binghamton and Ithaca. Their riders have been partnering with the New York Milk Bank since 2016, when they were recruited by Bouchet-Horwitz to make emergency donor breast milk deliveries to mothers at home and to NICU's at hospitals.

"The New York Milk Bank does remarkable work, ensuring that infants in need are provided with safe, pasteurized donor human milk when their mother's own milk is not sufficient or available," **said Harckham**. I was at the starting line of the Milk Caravan in Valhalla to thank the organizers and all the bikers making the long journey to Buffalo, to raise awareness of this critical resource for babies and families."

"While many expectant mothers may intend to breastfeed, that option isn't always medically or personally possible for every family once a baby is born, and that's where the New York Milk Bank is truly filling a gap," **said Senator Tim Kennedy**. "Through the creation of the Milk Caravan, we're ensuring that nutrient-rich donor milk is distributed to premature newborns and highlighting a resource for families who need it most, while also raising awareness about the need for donor milk statewide."

**Julie Bouchet-Horwitz, Executive Director, The New York Milk Bank, said,** "The NY Milk Bank collects extra breastmilk from healthy lactating women, pasteurizes it and distributes it to babies in need, especially premature infants. The collaboration between the Sirens Women's

Motorcycle Club and The New York Milk bank began in 2016 when the milk bank first opened. The Sirens pick up and deliver donor milk in emergency situations. On 9/14-15, 2019 they are escorting donor milk across the state to Buffalo with pit stops in Binghamton and Ithaca to raise awareness about donor milk for premature and sick infants."