



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## Community Prepares to Live by Attending Active Shooter Defense Training Hosted by Senator James Sanders Jr.

JAMES SANDERS JR. June 27, 2022



In light of the recent mass shootings at a supermarket in Buffalo and an elementary school in Texas, Senator James Sanders Jr. is once again hosting active shooter defense trainings to educate and inform the community. The first one was on Saturday, June 24, 2022 at the Far Rockaway YMCA in Arverne.

“Hopefully, this never happens to you, but if it does, you better have a plan,” Senator Sanders said. “Most people don’t live because they are not prepared to live. They don’t think about it,

and therefore they don't know what to do.”

Sanders added, “Committed people who are serious, especially if they are trained, can absolutely take an attacker down. This information that we are bringing to you is not meant to scare you, but to do the opposite – to allow us to live. We live in an America that is awash with guns. There are more guns than people, and yet with all these guns, we feel less and less safe.”

Featured guests included: The NYS Division of Homeland Security, The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), NYPD Shield and the Red Dawn Combat Club. Attendees learned how to escape a dangerous situation, how to recognize the warning signs of someone becoming an active shooter, the types of weapons used and how to fight off an attacker as a last resort.

The event was more than sitting down and listening to good information. Michael Bottier, head instructor at Red Dawn Combat Club, gave an interactive defense presentation practicing moves to take down a shooter; just by using everyday objects that are within your vicinity, and explaining how to protect vulnerable parts of one's body from sustaining a fatal wound. Youth from the audience volunteered to practice the moves and Bottier used toy Nerf guns as props.

Matthew Alilionis, NYC Regional Director, Emergency Management, NYS Division of Homeland Security, highlighted a three-step method for how to handle an active shooter attack - Run, Hide, Fight. If you can get out, do so. If you can't get out, find a place to hide. As a last resort, attack the shooter with aggression. Use improvised weapons and attempt to disarm him.

Sgt. John Shoppmann of NYPD's Counterterrorism Division SHIELD Unit, described a

similar set of survival steps - Avoid, Barricade, Confront. Stay away from stairwells and exterior doors. Seek shelter. Lock and blockade the door. If there is no other option, act quickly, aggressively and collectively to confront and attack the shooter.

Eric J. Weiss, Deputy United States Marshal, with the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force spoke about the mindset of an active shooter and how they can demonstrate behaviors to signal that they may be planning an attack. Signs include becoming isolated, change in appearance, and becoming fixated on an idea or ideology. It may also include hurting animals, giving away their belongings, and posting disturbing messages on social media about violence or suicide. If someone is concerned about a person steering towards this type of violence, they need to try to get him or her help. Weiss noted that active shooter events can occur anywhere and in 97 percent of cases the perpetrators are male. He explained that the overall way to prevent such a situation from occurring in the first place is to become a hard target through vigilance, situational awareness and other security measures.

We would like to thank the Rockaway YMCA for providing the space to host the event and TRI-MED Home Care Services for providing refreshments. We also want to thank our community partners: Rockaway Development & Revitalization Corporation (RDRC), Far Rockaway NAACP, Regional Ready Rockaway, 149th Street South Ozone park Civic Association, United Neighbors Civic Association (UNCA), Far Rockaway Arverne Nonprofit Coalition (FRANC), Arverne View Tenants Together, REMA4US, Beach 41st Street Tenant Association, Local 372-DC37 and Oceanside Resident Association