



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Sean M. Ryan

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KENMORE, N.Y. – Today, Thursday, July 7, 2022, New York State Senator Sean Ryan visited Colvin Cleaners on Elmwood Avenue to present the owners with a New York State Senate Empire Award in recognition of the store’s many contributions to the Kenmore community, including their “Coats 4 Kids” and “Gowns for Prom” programs. The New York State Senate Empire Award recognizes businesses and institutions in New York State that have made significant contributions to their local community.

Colvin Cleaners has been a Western New York staple since its founding in 1931. In 1943, the business relocated to Elmwood Avenue, where it still operates today. In the 1990s, they began a program to help Western New Yorkers in need stay warm in the winter. More than 25 years later, through their **Coats 4 Kids** program, they have collected, cleaned, sorted, and distributed well over 150,000 free coats to children in need throughout Western New York.

For over 15 years, Colvin Cleaners has also been operating its **Gowns for Prom** program. Each year, the business collects new and used prom dresses to donate to high school students who could not otherwise afford them. They arrange a time for the students to pick out their dresses, and then tailor them and deliver them to their schools free of charge.

When the 2020 Gowns for Prom program was canceled due to COVID, Colvin Cleaners stepped up for the community once again by creating the “Get a Mask, Give a Mask” program. With less work for their tailors and seamstresses, this new program utilized their talents to make more than 200 masks daily. The masks were donated to customers, local essential workers, and non-profit agencies.

Senator Sean Ryan said, “When you think about fixtures of the Kenmore community, Colvin Cleaners is right at the top of the list. The Billoni family has been doing great work for over 90 years, and their selfless commitment to their community has touched thousands upon thousands of Western New Yorkers. Even with the challenges thrown at them by the pandemic, they continued to find ways to support their community. This award is a well-deserved honor for a great family business.”

Paul Billoni, Owner & President of Colvin Cleaners, said, "Our community is everything. I was taught by my parents that giving back to people and our community is the right thing to do. That's why our family, our employees, and Colvin Cleaners as a whole are dedicated to making a difference any way we can. I am proud to receive this award and to think about the

future of Colvin Cleaners, Coats 4 Kids, and Gowns for Prom in the hands of the next generation, with my son, Chris, and my daughter, Erica -- and for many generations after that. After all, this is just the beginning."

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