



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Jack M. Martins

From the Desk of Senator Jack M. Martins

JACK M. MARTINS August 1, 2011

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A World of Good, Right Here at Home

If you could afford only one, would you pay for heat, your rent, or buy groceries?

If that seems like a rhetorical question to you, be thankful, because for thousands of less fortunate Long Islanders, it is not. The disturbing truth is we have neighbors right here on Long Island, in our very own towns and villages, who struggle with questions like that every month.

It is estimated that there are 320,000 Long Islanders who are hungry or food insecure each day. According to a report by Long Island Cares and Island Harvest, 47 percent of those they serve have to choose between food and utilities. An even greater 49 percent have to choose between food and rent.

The problem is on an island of so much wealth and affluence it's easy to overlook those who are falling through the cracks. That affluence brings with it a notoriously high cost of living. Everything from rent, to utilities, to taxes costs more and for the working poor and those on fixed incomes, it means a precarious day-to-day existence. Add to that a recession that left thousands of hard-working people who once donated to food pantries now standing in line themselves and we have the makings of a crisis.

That's why beginning August 1, I am sponsoring a food drive to benefit Long Island Cares, The Harry Chapin Food Bank, which does an exceptional job combating hunger on Long Island. Founded in 1980 by singer and activist Harry Chapin of Huntington, it provides food and support services to a network of more than 540 community-based agencies including food pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters, child-care programs, disability organizations and veteran services.

Many of you may already know Long Island Cares and support their good work but to put it plainly, they need more help. So I reached out to the villages in the Seventh Senate District to ask what could be done and was overwhelmed by the enthusiastic teamwork they offered. Our local leaders have stepped up and placed collection receptacles in each of their village halls, essentially creating a network of convenient outposts in every neighborhood ready to take your donation. Now all we need is you.

Will you please take a moment and bring any canned food, peanut butter and jelly, nuts, granola bars, cookies and crackers as well as dried good such as pasta, macaroni and cheese, rice, and hot and cold cereals? Almost any other packaged items can be donated as well.

You can go the village halls of Floral Park, Great Neck Plaza, Great Neck, Kensington, North Hills, Plandome Heights, Russell Gardens, Saddle Rock, Thomaston, Westbury, Williston Park, Baxter Estates, Flower Hill, Manorhaven, Mineola, Port Washington North, Roslyn, Lake Success, Munsey Park, East Hills and New Hyde Park.

There will also be collection receptacles at my District Office at 151 Herricks Road, Garden City Park (Suite 202) as well as the Elmont Public Library, the Port Washington Library and Dolphin Bookshop in Port Washington. Visit my website at www.martins.nysenate.gov for more information.

Friends, you know as well as I what makes Long Island such a great place to live, it's people like you who still care about their neighbors and their neighborhoods. I ask you to please donate a bag of food today. You will be doing a world of good right here at home.