



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

## **Senator Martins Visits Helen Keller National Center, Will Participate in Helen's Walk**

Jack M. Martins

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On Friday, April 22, Senator Jack M. Martins visited the Helen Keller National Center in Sands Point to learn about the programs the center offers for deaf-blind youths and adults. Senator Martins came away extremely impressed with the work the center does and the abilities the students possess.

The mission of the Helen Keller National Center is to enable each person who is deaf-blind to live and work in the community of their choice. The center teaches skills that empower individuals to live independent lives.

Senator Martins met with Executive Director Joseph J. McNulty, Director of Marketing and Development Suzanne V. Ressa and Director of Direct Services Susan Ruzenski.

The first stop on the tour was cooking class, where Senator Martins met with Tracy Gilbert and her seeing-eye-dog Marley. Tracy had once been a student at the center and is now teaching. Senator Martins was amazed at the abilities of the students in cooking various dishes.

The next stop was the computer room, where Senator Martins was showed how technology is used for learning. Computers are used by the deaf and blind to communicate effectively and also surf the Internet.

While in the computer room, Senator Martins was introduced to Scott Davert. Despite being blind, Scott, once a student at the center, earned a Master's Degree

and now has returned to the center to teach. With a penchant for technology, Scott felt it was important to give back to the center since it had given him so much.

“This is a first-class center that does incredible work. The instructors and students are both amazing individuals who are inspiring. They want to learn and they don’t let anything stop them. Some may live without sight or sound, but they certainly don’t live without heart. I can’t wait to go back to the center and participate in Helen’s Walk,” said Senator Martins.

The Senator vowed to return on Sunday, May 1 for Helen’s Walk, a stroll through beautiful Sands Point to help raise funds for the programs and services the center officers. Check-in and registration is from 8-9 a.m. with the official start at 9:15 a.m. For more information on the walk, visit [hknc.org](http://hknc.org) or call 944-8900.