



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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From the Desk of Senator Jack M. Martins

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Celebrating Moms

When I became a new dad many years ago, I asked a friend whom I admired, how to be a good father. Without missing a beat, he responded simply, “Love their mother.”

As a husband to a mom of four and son to a mom of five, you can already guess that I live in a mom-centric zone and over time, that lesson has become abundantly clear to me. So I

thought I'd take a break this week from the usual legislative topics and instead reflect upon Mother's Day and the powerful love we celebrate this second Sunday of May each year. One need only look around to see that family life is changing fast but even so, I'd say moms are the rock upon which stable families are built, holding them together often at great personal sacrifice. And family life is microcosm of how we treat one another in general.

My friend was right then and he's right now so as we celebrate Mother's Day, we might consider some ways throughout the year, every day, to help moms wherever and whenever we can. In that light, I wanted to bring your attention to two special Long Island programs that you might not know about: Momma's House, with several locations around the Island, and Catholic Charities' Regina Residence in Merrick. These two home-grown, residential programs are dedicated to meeting the needs of young, unwed mothers and mothers-to-be that unfortunately do not have the support systems necessary to raise their children. This is especially stressful on Long Island with its notoriously high cost of living, where rent or child-care eats up entire paychecks.

Going it alone is simply not an option for these young families. That's why these programs, supported by people like you, step in to see to the physical, social and emotional well-being of both the moms and their babies. They provide structured living environments with scheduled meal times, shared chores, and even study times. They also provide counseling and child care so the women can finish their educations and find meaningful work. There are even mentoring programs that match the young ladies with successful working women in their communities who become personally involved in their development. It's in homes like these that the skills for successful family life are learned and over the years, these combined programs have literally sent thousands of young women into the world as confident, independent and loving mothers.

The creativity and dedication shown by Long Islanders in programs like these are perfect examples of the type of citizenship that makes Long Island thrive. That the young women there remain motivated to keep growing and learning in the face of adversity is a testament to the unique power of motherhood.

So maybe this year, instead of giving flowers or the chocolate you'll probably eat anyway, you might consider celebrating your own mother or grandmother by volunteering at or supporting the work of these two special Long Island Institutions. You can visit Momma's House online at www.mommashouse.org or Regina Residence at www.catholiccharities.cc to learn more.

Thank God that "mother" is also a verb, not just a noun. To all the moms reading this column, thank you for the love that is uniquely yours to give and may you know that love and respect for all you do extends well beyond your own children.