



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins Celebrates Lunar New Year at Herricks High School

JACK M. MARTINS February 14, 2011

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Senator Jack M. Martins joined close to 1,000 members of the Herricks community Saturday at the 10th anniversary of the Herricks Lunar New Year Celebration hosted by the Asian American Cultural Club and the Chinese American Association of North Hempstead.

The gathering featured food, entertainment, singing, wushu, arts and crafts, Chinese Checker tournaments and the Lion Dance. Senator Martins was invited to give opening remarks during the program and wished the community “Gong Xi, Gong Xi” or “Happy New Year!”

Trisha Ho, Lana Choy and Herricks School Superintendent Dr. John Bierwirth welcomed Senator Martins to the New Year’s festival. The Senator was given a tour of the exhibits and competitions as well as met with Chinese leaders. “This was an absolutely sensational event with first class entertainment for everyone,” said Senator Martins adding, “the costumes, yo-yo demonstrations, art, singing, wushu and magic were fantastic! In fact, I want to learn how to do that myself and join the students next year!”

Senator Martins greeted many of the entertainers, Chinese leaders and parents before the opening ceremony. The Senator discussed issues and concerns with Chinese leaders and senior citizens who were on hand for the ceremony. “Events like the Lunar New Year bring out a lot of people who don’t necessarily make it to a civic meeting. Hearing what’s on their minds and listening to their concerns help me advocate better for the community,” said Senator Martins.

The student Lion Dancers of Herricks High School greeted Senator Martins and talked with him about their act before the ceremony. The dancers went on to wow the audience with a traditional Chinese ceremonial dance complete with tricks, fireworks and audience engagement! The Lion Dance is frequently performed during the Lunar New Year. The lion is a paper mache animal used by two people that moves to the rhythm of a drum beat.

“The lion dance was truly exciting to watch. The young people who performed worked very hard and got everyone excited and cheering,” said Senator Martins.

The school administration also got into act by getting dressed up and offering candies to children as they pumped up the crowd for the entertainment, singing portions of the celebration. The capacity crowd was delighted with the Saturday Recreational sing-along class of young children who performed two dances. The children were dressed in traditional Chinese clothing and did a terrific job.

A magic show highlighted by Ms. Ming Li and Mr. Wei Cui brought mystical magical feats to the school through the use of rings, levitation, fire and water. The Herricks High School Chinese language class also sang an arrangement song of "Tomorrow Will Be Better," directed by Lillian Zhang.

Just about everyone in the crowd looked on in amazement with the Chinese Yo-Yo demonstration performed by Jonathan Chen, Yvonne Cheng, Will Chung, Alyssa Go, Shirley Jin, Jonathan Ma, Lorraine Wong and Litao Zhao. The Yo-Yo tricks and movements were a true crowd pleaser!

The Chinese Drum Dance, Wushu and acrobatic circus were highlights of the evening. In addition, Janic Ma presented the annual table tennis and Chinese Chess tournament awards to the winners and runners-up.

"This celebration was terrific," said Senator Martins. "I want to thank all the young people at Herricks High School for their hard work, the Asian American Club, the Chinese American Association and the Herricks School District for their kind invitation and allowing me to be a part of this special evening for the community."