



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

## Senators Martins and Flanagan Honor Long Island Students For Cancer Research

JACK M. MARTINS March 6, 2012

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Senators John Flanagan (2nd Senate District) and Jack Martins (7th Senate District) joined together to recognize Commack High School junior Kayla Neville and Great Neck South High School senior John Yang for their efforts to study experimental nanoparticles in an effort to better treat and diagnose cancer in human. The two students were honored by the full Senate and presented with New York State Senate Resolutions for recently being

recognized nationally for their joint project and for their dedication in the fight against cancer.

Neville and Yang spent last summer working together, under the supervision of biomedical engineering professor Balaji Sitharaman, at Stony Brook University in a project that was jointly sponsored by the Great Neck Breast Cancer Coalition and the Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition. In the study, the two young scientists injected the experimental nanoparticle into human cells and discovered that the human body could tolerate the material.

If approved to be safe and not toxic for humans, these experimental nanoparticles could be injected into a patient before an MRI to help make an image clearer and easier to read. This could lead to a greater ability for doctors to find previously hidden tumors and earlier detection for some.

Their discovery could also aid in delivering cancer-fighting drugs to cancer patients.

The two students presented their findings during the annual convention hosted by the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and were presented with the “Best Basic Research Poster” award. According to a Newsday article, this was the first time that the award was ever presented to anyone other than a professional researcher.

“It is so rewarding to be able to celebrate the achievements of these two fine young students and to shine a light on them so they can serve as role models for their fellow students.

Hopefully, they realize how much of a difference they have made in the lives of many other people who they will never meet but who they and their research will impact greatly,” stated Senator Flanagan. “I hope that Kayla and John and their families are very proud of

themselves and of their accomplishment.”

“Senator Flanagan has supported the work of the Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition for many years and we are extremely proud he is recognizing Kayla Neville and John Yang for their most recent efforts. We will count on these young folks to be the generation that moves environmental health research into action,” said Karen Joy Miller, Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition Founder.

"Our coalition is so proud of John Yang's achievements and his pursuit to research environmental links to breast cancer through our Students & Scientists Research Program." said Laura Weinberg, president of the Great Neck Breast Cancer Coalition. “Under the auspices of his Stony Brook University mentors, John's work to determine whether graphene nanoparticles are safe to use in biomedical applications is exemplary. John is an exceptional, young man who will continue to enhance public health."

“These two students are a shining example of the quality of education taking place and what can be accomplished through a desire to help others. They are future leaders whose work is going to make an impact on the field of science and hopefully save lives,” said Senator Martins. “It was a privilege to honor them on the floor of the Senate. I applaud them as well as their parents, teachers and those who helped give them the opportunity to conduct their research such as the Great Neck Breast Cancer Coalition and the Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition.”

The resolution read by Senator Martins can be viewed at the following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBgoPEV4HBA>