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Op-Ed: Thanking NYS Senator Owen Johnson for His Service

Lorraine Pace, president of Breast Cancer Help, Incorporated, thanks the retiring state senator for all he's done for to help fight the disease and raise awareness.

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It's been my honor and pleasure to know (retiring) New York State Senator [Senator Owen Johnson](#) for th to the community never ceases to astound me.

In 1992, when I was diagnosed with breast cancer, I realized there weren't any breast cancer awareness or concerns with the amount of women in my area who were diagnosed with breast cancer and how many. I was also concerned about a local company that had been dumping cadmium, chromium and other harmful substances in the area. With those concerns I met with Senator Johnson to see if he could secure funding for a scientific evaluation of the area. West Islip.

Senator Johnson not only got the necessary funding for the survey, but he also remained an avid supporter, raising awareness about [breast cancer](#) and the importance of early detection.

Without him we would've never been able to receive the funding needed to validate the scientific findings. The mapping project for which he obtained the funding spread throughout Long Island, New York State and Japan. Without his encouragement and dedication to this vital issue, much of what we learned from the project would not have been possible. Senator Johnson and Senator Caesar Trunzo were instrumental in the funding of placing the first digital mammography system at [Brook University Medical Center](#).

He was also able to obtain the necessary funding for the most up-to-date digital mammography system that has been placed in the Bohlsen Women's Imaging Center in Islip.

Both he and Senator Kemp Hannon were avid supporters of establishing the New York State Cancer Registry. The "Check-off to Breast Cancer" check-off on New York State income tax forms to help fund the state's breast cancer research.

Along with Cornell Cooperative he helped launch a study of the effects of herbicides and pesticides in the environment. The study showed how non-chemical applications to prevent weeds and unwanted insects could be used as an alternative to chemical applications in the environment.

Senator Johnson continued to support the breast cancer movement through grants from the New York State Cancer Help, Incorporated, and our Long Island Cancer Help and Wellness Center.

The state of New York was very fortunate to have such an extremely dedicated individual such as [Senator Johnson](#). In the Senate, there'll be an empty seat that'll be very difficult to fill.

Very few will possess his compassion and understanding of the needs of not only his district, but also of Long Island.

The people of Long Island are indebted to Senator Johnson for all he's done for breast cancer. We're so very grateful for his leadership and dedication.

Lorraine Pace is a nationally known breast cancer survivor and the founding president of [Breast Cancer Help](#), a non-profit organization with a focus on action and advocacy to eradicate breast cancer.

Breast Cancer Help serves cancer survivors from Suffolk County; there've been cancer survivors from Nassau County who have received the organization's complimentary services. No one is turned away. Breast Cancer Help is not affiliated with any other organization.

Of note to Lindenhurst, Lynda Distler, former Village mayor, was the organization's first executive director, at the Lindenhurst Rainbow Center.

Editor's Note: Don't forget to share your thoughts and concerns about issues in the community with [Lorraine Pace](#).