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From

**Legislator Tom Cilmi**

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## Legislator Cilmi Kicks Off Literacy Month in East Islip



Suffolk County Legislator Tom Cilmi kicked off Literacy Month by reading “Peppe the Lamplighter” to Mr. Chiarelli’s fifth grade class at Connetquot Elementary School in East Islip. Set in the early 1900’s in New York City, the story is about a young immigrant boy from Little Italy who, despite his father’s disapproval, takes a job lighting street lamps at night. After weeks of ridicule from his father, one night Peppe decides to quit calling it a “stupid job.” When Peppe’s young sister failed to come home, his father implored him to light the street lamps. Peppe went out and, sure enough, found his sister next to the very last street lamp curled up on the ground in fear of the dark. Peppe brought his sister home to the delight of his father who promptly expressed his newfound pride in his son.

Legislator Cilmi used the story to explain to the students that everyone has a purpose and every job is important. He also took time to answer questions about his job. Asked if he could be President one day, Cilmi said he enjoys his job as a County Legislator, but added, “You never know.”

“There is nothing more rewarding than spending time with children,” Cilmi said. “I know the kids enjoyed this morning’s story as much as I, and I hope it also taught them a valuable lesson...that everyone matters and that everyone can take pride in what they do.”

Cilmi said this reading kicked off a month of weekly readings to children in his District in celebration of Literacy Month. He’s also scheduled engagements in Bay Shore, Bohemia and Islip. He said, “Kids have so many distractions these days and more and more, communication has been reduced to letters and symbols, like LOL and :-). It’s so important that children learn the art of words and the value of reading. If I can help inspire children to read with a half hour of storytelling every now and again, while at the same time filling my own bucket of joy, I’m happy to do it.”