

# Dads Step up to a Mother's Day Challenge

“Motherhood goes parallel to fatherhood, and that’s a beautiful thing,” says Douglas Walker, who is currently not with the mothers of his two sons, but who can still appreciate their importance. “It’s also a journey that can be long and tiresome.”

Douglas was attending DYCD’s Mother’s Day Recognition Event, on the Saturday before Mother’s Day, at The Children’s Village community center in the Polo Grounds in Upper Manhattan. “He wanted me to come,” Douglas says, looking over toward his second-grader son, Douglas Jr., who wanted to take part in creating Mother’s Day cards and jewelry, as well as eat a good lunch of fried chicken, macaroni and cheese and other treats.



DYCD organized seven similar events across the city, in an effort to encourage fathers to recognize the important role of the mothers. “It’s a partnership,” says Douglas, who has had his share of stress with the moms, but who doesn’t want to walk away from his role as a father. “Young men need someone to be there for them. I want my son to know who I am.”

DYCD Commissioner Jeanne Mullgrav gave a speech to the families, in which she used her own family experience to relay the vital role mothers provide. Also on hand to speak was the Reverend Horace Stewart, one of the honorees of last year’s NYC DADS Matter Awards, who brought his wife and one of their daughters. “Our partnership is not perfect, but it works,” the Reverend said. “I believe that what makes me a good father is that I have such a good wife.”



Daddy Anthony Price would easily second that, having been with his wife for 25 years. Anthony was helping his daughter, Angelina, and son, Christopher, string necklaces for their mother. “Being in a relationship is hard. You have to understand your significant other,” Anthony said. “It’s all about communication.”

These were some seriously involved, caring dads walking the halls of the Community center, holding their kids' hands, helping them with their projects, playing basketball with them. Kareem, dad to Jayon and Corey, could talk tough about "keeping the household together," and "keeping order." But it only works if he's entirely present—even in the kitchen. "Oh yeah," Kareem says, "I cook dinner on Tuesdays and Wednesdays when I'm not at work." And his sons were quick to chime in, reeling off his best dishes, which include BBQ chicken, macaroni and cheese, and baked fish.

Providing final remarks for the afternoon, the City's Fatherhood Coordinator, Alan Farell, encouraged the fathers to keep up the good work, and to remember that "You're not problems to be solved. You are part of the solution," he said, reminding them to build on these "memorable moments," with their children.

These dads at the Polo Grounds appeared to be up to the challenge.



NYC DADS' Farell, Rev. Stewart and Commissioner Mulgrav celebrate Mother's day.