



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## Queens Caribbean Carnival 2024: A Vibrant Showcase of Unity, Culture, and Community Pride in the Heart of Far Rockaway

JAMES SANDERS JR. August 27, 2024



On Saturday, August 24th, the Queens Caribbean Carnival filled the streets of Far Rockaway with the vibrant colors, sounds, and spirit of the Caribbean. Hosted by Senator James Sanders Jr., in partnership with Assemblymember Khaleel Anderson and Councilmember Selvena Brooks-Powers, the event brought together thousands of participants and spectators. New York City Comptroller Brad Lander also made a special appearance, adding to the significance of the celebration.

The festivities began with a lively float procession that started at Bayswater Park and made its way to Beach 17th Street and DredSurfer Grill. The parade was a spectacular display of Caribbean culture, featuring dancers in colorful costumes, music trucks, and kiddie masqueraders. "Creating memories, establishing and cultivating relationships, and bringing togetherness through culture is always our goal!" said Jewel Nash, who was responsible for the stunning costumes that adorned the participants.

Following the parade, the celebration continued at the beach with a concert that featured performances by local artists and dancers. The event also included a bustling marketplace where vendors offered a taste of the Caribbean with delicacies, crafts, and souvenirs. Laila Boyd, who was part of the Vendor Committee, shared her excitement: "It was a pleasure being a part of the Queens Carnival Committee and bringing cultural vibes to the Rockaway community."

One of the highlights of the event was the VIP Elected Officials Breakfast, which provided a platform for community leaders to connect and celebrate Caribbean heritage. "Queens Carnival is keeping the Caribbean culture alive," said Karen Crawford, who organized the breakfast.

Lisa George, Acting Chair of the Queens Carnival, reflected on the growth of the event: "The carnival, now in its sixth year, has reached new heights. This year's additions, including music trucks from MIZWE and PRESTIGE and kiddie masqueraders from Jewel Jewels, have brought a fresh dynamic to the event. We anticipate expanding and enhancing the carnival next year for the benefit of all Queens residents, and what a more beautiful and better place for it to take place than in the Rockaways."

Ambassador Dr. Monica Sanchez, who served as a grand marshal, remarked, "I was honored to be invited as a grand marshal at the Queens Carnival. The event was a true display of

unity and community togetherness, with children dancing, residents enjoying themselves, and VIP guests including NYC Comptroller Brad Lander. Hats off to the organizers and everyone who made this event a success."

Another Grand Marshal expressed their pride in representing Jamaica: "It was a great honor for me to serve as one of the Grand Marshals for the Queens Carnival. My family and I were proud to represent Jamaica, a free and progressive nation in the heart of the Caribbean. This year, we celebrated 62 years of independence, proving that opportunity is not limited by size. Icons like Vice President Kamala Harris and General Colin Powell show how Jamaicans have contributed to the growth of Queens in areas like healthcare, law, and education. Thank you to Senator Sanders, Assemblyman Khaleel Anderson, Councilwoman Selvena Brooks-Powers, RDRC, and everyone who made this event possible. 'Out of Many, One People.' One Love!"

Council Majority Whip Selvena N. Brooks-Powers added, "It was an honor to host and celebrate another successful Queens Carnival in partnership with Senator James Sanders Jr., Assembly Member Khaleel Anderson, and the Rockaway Development and Revitalization Corporation. Each year, the Queens Carnival attracts revelers from all over, and this year we were certain to add even more activities for families to benefit from, including the distribution of hundreds of school supplies and bookbags. The Queens Carnival is an important opportunity for us to bring our community together, celebrate our rich local culture, and so much more!"

Senator James Sanders Jr. summed up the day by saying, "This year's Queens Caribbean Carnival was a tremendous success, showcasing the best of our community's vibrant culture. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Councilwoman Selvena Brooks-Powers, Assemblyman Khaleel Anderson, and the Rockaway Development and Revitalization Corporation for their partnership in making this event possible. Additionally, I want to thank the Carnival Committee, our sponsors, vendors, and performers for their tireless

efforts. The energy, unity, and joy displayed by everyone involved made this event unforgettable. We look forward to continuing this tradition and bringing even more excitement and cultural pride to the Rockaways next year."

The Queens Caribbean Carnival has become a cornerstone event in the borough, celebrating the diversity and vibrancy of the Caribbean community while fostering a sense of unity and cultural pride. The organizers look forward to further expanding the event next year to continue bringing the spirit of the Caribbean to the heart of Queens.