



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

# Senator Parker Wins the Stars of New York Dance Competition

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December 21, 2012



(Brooklyn, NY) – For several months Senator Parker has been practicing to participate in the Stars of New York Dance Competition. The Stars of New York Dance is a charitable, thrilling and judged dance competition for New York City leaders that helps raise dance scholarship funds for children from low-income communities and provides them with a constructive means of developing discipline, character and self-esteem to succeed in school and in life.

This year was the 3rd Annual event. In 2010, they kicked it off the first competition with the Reverend Al Sharpton as our Special Guest Dancer and Colvin W. Grannum, President of Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation won with his partner Shani M. Worrell who represented Restoration Youth Arts Dance Academy. In 2011, Susan L. Taylor, Editor Emeritus of Essence Magazine and Founder of the National CARES Mentoring Movement was honored and Rev. Lawrence E. Aker, III, Senior Pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church won with his dance partner Dr. Melissa Vaughan of Professional Center for Arts, Inc.

In 2010, the Stars of New York Dance provided 16 children with free and subsidized dance education with the participating dance companies that year. In 2011, 11 children were served. Up to 17 children will be served this year.

With Senator Kevin Parker winning, his dance partner's dance company, Asase Yaa African American Dance Theater, will receive \$5,000 to provide five or more children with free or subsidized high quality dance education at Asase Yaa. The other participating dance companies will receive \$1,500 to provide free or subsidized dance scholarships as well. On average, a year of dance education is worth a \$1,000 investment in a child, so Asase Yaa can choose to provide five students with \$1,000 scholarship each or can reach many more students and subsidize their current tuition.

Senator Parker, Senator Sampson, Councilmember Darlene Mealy, Reverend Richard Honey Well and Teacher Donna White danced in this year's competition. Senator Parker chose to do hip-hop dance with music from the 80's. "I love hip-hop music from the 80s. To me music from that decade represented a time of cultural awareness, community growth and civic engagement." Stated Parker.

"I was floored by Senator Kevin Parker's performance last night at The Stars of New York Dance. He and Zakiya Harris wowed the crowd and provided the audience with a wonderful hip-hop nostalgic moment. The children of Brooklyn are so grateful to the Senator for volunteering his time to dance for them. His win with Zakiya will allow The Stars of New York Dance to provide five or more children from low-income

communities in Brooklyn with a free or subsidized year of high-quality dance education and training with Asase Yaa African American Dance Theater, where Zakiya serves as Artistic Director of their performing arts school. " Stated Cheryl Todmann, Executive Producer, The Stars of New York Dance.

"Competition when done in a nurturing and safe environment is very necessary. It helps build confidence and character in young people." Continued Zakiya Harris, Senator Parker's dance coach.

Senator Parker was the proud winner of the 2012 competition. "I am truly grateful to have the opportunity to do what I enjoy, while helping the children in my community become engaged in the arts. It was fun to show off my dance skills, my dance partner Zakiya Harris was an amazing teacher and most importantly, the proceeds we raised will help children stay engaged." Said Parker. "Dance is a powerful ally for developing many of the positive attributes of a growing child including physical fitness, emotional stability, social awareness, and cognitive learning."

### **About Senator Kevin Parker**

Senator Kevin S. Parker is intimately familiar with the needs of his ethnically diverse community that consists of 311,000 constituents in Flatbush, East Flatbush, Midwood, Ditmas Park, Kensington and Borough Park. He is the Ranking Member of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee, former Majority Whip and Chair of the Democratic Task Force on New Americans.

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