



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

Gov's Top Faith Leader, Karim Camara, Talks Grants at Sanders' Clergy Breakfast

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September 8, 2015



State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village) held a Community Clergy Breakfast on August 28 at Calvary Baptist Church in Jamaica, bringing together faith-based leaders of different denominations from across the district to share information and discuss ways they can help their congregations.

This month's guest speaker was the Rev. Karim Camara, executive director of the Governor's Office of Faith-Based Community Development Services. The newly created office, which is the first of its kind in New York State, was designed to be a resource for faith-based non-profit organizations who help sustain vulnerable communities by providing a wide range of social services.

"The original pioneers of community development were faith leaders," Camara said. "People who were inspired by faith and changed their communities, whether it was feeding the hungry, getting poor people out of poverty, whether it was the settlement houses, dealing with domestic violence, dealing with homelessness - the pioneers of these movements were people who were inspired by faith to go outside their religious congregations and say, 'It's not just about the four walls, it's about using our respective faiths to go out and make the world a better place.'"

Camara served nearly ten years in the State Assembly before being appointed to his new position at Governor's Office of Faith-Based Community Development Services, which provides assistance with capacity building, coalition building and community outreach, as well as acting a liaison between faith-based groups and government agencies to help facilitate grants.

"Once you have an idea, a goal - start using the resources you have right now, right where you are, at your houses of worship," Senator Sanders advised. "Once you have developed your plan then you can approach people and say, 'I want to partner with you.'"