



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Diane J. Savino

Minnie Graham

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Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Minnie Graham

Minnie Graham is the Founder and Executive Director of the Empowerment Zone, Inc., on Staten Island's North Shore. Through her organization, she provides career counseling, job preparation, basic computer classes, tenant organization, mediation, after-school homework help, Christmas and Thanksgiving giveaways, community clean-up, beautification, health fairs, markets, and HIV/AIDS and STD education for at-risk women. She also developed EmpowerGirls, a program for at-risk girls ages 12 to 16, which teaches life skills health, career exploration/job preparation, financial literacy and civic engagement.

Ms. Graham has a long history of community service, working diligently for almost three decades to help improve the lives of Staten Island's minority community. In 1989, while serving as Vice President of the Parent Teacher Association at Public School 57, she helped start the African-American Parent Council. In 1993, under her directorship, this group established the longest existing summer day camp and after-school program for at-risk youth in the Park Hill community, its first food pantry, the "Clothes Closet" for needy families, the "School on Saturday" program, and bilingual case management services for residents in five of Staten Island's poorest communities. She also co-developed the HIV/AIDS Parent Education Network for the Staten Island AIDS Task Force.

An active member of First Central Baptist Church for over 30 years, Ms. Graham has served as a trustee, Sunday school teacher, on the Usher's Ministry and currently as coordinator of the Singles' Ministry. She is one of the original members of the board of directors of the Central Family Life Center.

Ms. Graham earned her bachelor's degree in Psychology from the College of Staten Island and a master's degree in General Counseling from Long Island University, where she also received an Advanced Certificate in Family Counseling. She is the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions.

Ms. Graham attributes her strength and courage to her late mother, Ruth, who always told her to do and be her best. She is the proud mother of two beautiful daughters who inspire her to never give up.