



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

State Senator Kevin Parker's and A Shared Dream Foundation's Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute Concert Draws Largest Attendance in Event's 11 Year History

KEVIN S. PARKER January 20, 2015

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FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE SENATOR KEVIN PARKER (D-Brooklyn)

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Brooklyn, NY – On the evening of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Brooklyn residents of all ages, walks of life, and faiths gathered at the Walt Whitman Theatre at Brooklyn College to honor Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life, legacy, and dream.

Dr. King's iconic and beloved words and legacy were praised through riveting performances at A Shared Dream Foundation's free Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute Concert for the 11th year in a row. Senator Kevin Parker (SD21), founder and now a major sponsor, paid tribute to MLK, Jr. through a rousing speech that inspired attendees from his diverse constituency to reflect on the impact the African-American Civil Rights Movement had on the U.S., its meaning today, and how Martin Luther King, Jr. championed the movement. Senator Parker's speech encouraged and extolled present day efforts toward a more equal and unified world that reflected Dr. King's life mission. Senator Parker emphasized the meaning of MLK Day:

“This is an important day -- a day when we very deliberately and thoughtfully thank and honor Dr. King for the work he accomplished; the hopes he held and shared with a divided nation. Given the state of the nation around Civil Rights issues today, it's important to remember Dr. King's approach toward the Civil Rights Movement: non-violent resistance. Non-violent resistance is not a passive ideology -- standing up for our rights comes from an active perspective, a perspective that we must maintain to make meaningful strides toward great change.”

Celebrated WBLS radio host Liz Black hosted the 11th annual event that began with a Tribute to the Ancestors lead by Baba Ifayinka (Carl Fanfair) from Ile Osa Knaran Yoruba Cultural and Spiritual Center. Invocations by Rabbi Yechiel Kaufman and Bishop Orlando Findlayter followed. Music commenced with Olivia Gilmore singing the National and Negro National Anthem. United States Senator Chuck Schumer, New York City Public Advocate Letitia James, and Council Member Jumaane Williams each spoke at the event about the meaning of MLK Day and MLK, Jr.'s accomplishments. Senator Kevin Parker and A Shared Dream Foundation's Board Chair, Tani Chambers, each spoke on “Manifesting the Dream.” Spirited performances were given by: the talented and youthful Brooklyn United Marching Band; 13 year old Devyn Tyson, “Princess of Soca,” whom danced and sang with her troupe of talented young ladies decked in bright hues; the versatile and exceptional I.E.T. Band; award winning spoken word artist Kavon Ward; Mr. Reed of America's Got Talent who performed with infectious energy; and the uniquely musically gifted The Stanleys -- that consisted of siblings Eric, Marcus, and Anhayla Stanley. The headliner, Grammy Award Winning gospel artist Bishop Hezekiah Walker, capped off the night with a captivating hour long performance accompanied by his supremely talented choir that lit up the crowd of over 2,000. Attendees sang, danced, and honored Martin Luther King, Jr. on their feet and in their seats.

A Shared Dream Foundation, with the support and sponsorship of Senator Kevin Parker, has kept this annual tribute concert free to the community for 11 years. A Shared Dream Foundation's mission is to uphold the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. and his dream of a more equal and unified world through faith and compassion.

The event was possible through partnerships with EmblemHealth and CUNY. Other partners included: Time Warner Cable, Entergy, Con Edison, SHARE NY, Optimum, 107.5 FM WBLS, and 1190 AM WLIB.

About Senator Kevin Parker

Senator Kevin S. Parker is intimately familiar with the needs of his ethnically diverse Brooklyn community that consists of 318,000 constituents in Flatbush, East Flatbush, Midwood, Ditmas Park, Kensington, Windsor Terrace, and Park Slope. He is the Ranking Member of the Senate Committees on Energy and Telecommunications and Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Assistant Democratic Leader for Intergovernmental Affairs, and Chair of the Democratic Task Force on New Americans.

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