



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

Mary Nelson

DAVID J. VALESKY May 11, 2011



Mary Nelson

Award: HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Year: 2011

Mary Nelson is a true humanitarian who embodies the spirit of giving to others. She is committed to empowering and inspiring others. In her home town of Syracuse, she is the founder of the Annual Youth Day Barbeque, and President/ CEO of The Mary Nelson's Youth Center, a Not for Profit agency.

In 2009, Ms. Nelson's Youth Center was opened and offered education, health, and career services. She has also made a commitment to provide free meals to all families in the community when needed. The center's administrative expenses are paid for by Mary Nelson and her proud and committed sponsors.

Ms. Nelson started organizing the Back to School Barbeque in 2002 as part of an effort to reduce violence in her neighborhood. Along with providing school supplies, she treated children and their families to a barbeque, which facilitated the community coming together in peace and showing love for another.

Over the years, Ms. Nelson's barbeque has grown to accommodate nearly 16,000 community members. She was a "Mom's Dream Come True" recipient of the Live with Regis and Kelly show in 2008, was featured on Oprah's Angel Network, and in 2008 was a delegate for President Barack Obama. Ms. Nelson was flown out to Los Angeles, California in September 2010 to tape a segment for NBC Universal School Pride. Each and every year The Mary Nelson's Annual Youth Day Barbeque has grown in record numbers and every youth goes home ready to begin the school year with the necessary school supplies.

Ms. Nelson has received many awards, including the Post-Standard Achievement Award, The Harriet Tubman Humanitarian Award, The National Council Negro Women Award, and the YWCA Academy of Diversity Achievers Award, to name a few.

Ms. Nelson lives in Syracuse with her husband Robert and seven children.