



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Eric Adams

Constituent Spotlight: Traci Johnson

ERIC ADAMS February 1, 2012



Traci Johnson, a native New Yorker, taught Chemistry and Earth Science for the Board of Education for a little over 15 years. In 2007, she started the skateboarding company *Culture Skateboards*, and last year built the second concrete skate park in Brooklyn.

She started a program in Crown Heights with local skaters to show them that skateboarding was a lifestyle with its own culture. The program initially showed skate videos and filming skate sessions in the basketball courts. As numbers grew, her group built ramps and traveled to historic skate spots to inspire and expand their expertise. Today, *Culture Skateboards*, is a

skateboard deck company with a team that competes and sponsors skating events in New York and neighboring states.

Culture Skateboards' foundation is based on the motto "Inspire Everyone" (through skating), and the organization strives to support efforts to create more skate parks in all communities. Two years ago, Traci took her team and about 100 local skaters to Senator Adams' office to make an appeal for a skate park to be built in Crown Heights. "I felt that there were very few skate parks in New York and the ones that were scheduled to be built were being constructed everywhere except Brooklyn," she explained.

This past summer, the group was able to build the first stage of a skate park in Brower Park in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, and host the first "Brower Bash" skate competition and celebration. "The beauty of this skate park is that it was the realization of a promise Senator Adams made to *Culture Skateboards* and a group of young skaters two years ago," shared Ms. Johnson.

The end result is a more united Crown Heights. The youth found a constructive way to get the changes they want in their community and it was supported by the adults, so now there is a dialogue that did not exist before. Since the park was built, skaters of all ages come from everywhere to enjoy it, and Crown Heights residents, other organizations and exercise classes are now using this area of the park because it is no longer seen as empty and isolated, but alive and more inviting.

There are plans to expand the skate park in 2012 and increase the number of skating events in the area. The change happening in this community is a great model of how collaboration between community-based companies and representatives can positively impact our city.