



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

## State Senator Kevin Parker Presented \$200,000 To Flatbush YMCA For Teen Centered Program And Branch Renovation

KEVIN S. PARKER May 26, 2016

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**(NEW YORK, NY May 26, 2016)** —Today, New York State Senator Kevin S. Parker continued his commitment to investing in youth development by presenting a \$200,000 check to the Flatbush YMCA of Greater New York. The check was presented to YMCA Executive Director Meishay Gattis, who was accompanied by more than 30 members of the YMCA community.

Half of the money, allocated by Senator Parker and Senate Independent Democratic Conference Leader Senator Jeff D. Klein, will go toward the Flatbush YMCA's Teen Centered Program, and the other half will be used as capital for the Flatbush branch renovation. Through this funding, Senator Parker and Senator Klein showed their longstanding dedication to developing resourceful programs for children and families in underserved communities.

"It is crucial to have programs and supports in place to prepare our youth for the many opportunities that await them in life. With the uncertainty surrounding the funding for the City's Summer Youth Employment Program, we are grateful to be able to support community based programs like the Flatbush YMCA," said Senator Parker. "The YMCA has always been a source of empowerment for families in our districts, and I stand eager to support institutions and programs that serve not only the children and families of Flatbush, but all working families across New York State."

"The YMCA has long been a resource for our city's underserved neighborhoods, and the programs that these centers offer are vital to our city's children and families," Senator Klein said. "I have been proud to work to help expand these programs throughout the boroughs. Having worked with Senator Parker to secure this funding, I remain committed to supporting these resourceful programs for our communities in need."

The Parker/Klein partnership has been critical in helping the center change its Teen Centered Program, which serves kids ranging from age 13 to 19, from a once a week after-school session to five days of leadership activities, civic engagement, civic learning projects and workshops. It has also been crucial in helping the center hire part-time counselors to coordinate the events.

“We sincerely thank Senators Parker and Klein for this support and we look forward to continuing our work together to serve our community,” said Meishay Gattis.

Through this funding, Gattis plans to structure the program more around the kids’ needs and interests, and create activities geared toward helping them develop fundamental skills for the future. He will increase the number of activities available for members and develop a weekly schedule to allow them to sign up for workshops, games, community service and many more exercises of their interest.

“At the Y, we work every day to create a healthier, stronger and more connected New York City,” Gattis continued. “At the Flatbush Y, engaging young people with programs that teach them about ways to affect their communities, keep themselves healthy and truly succeed in life is just one way that we do that.”

The program has already shown positive impact in the life of its increasing registered members. It has helped them gain knowledge in college readiness through career counseling, college visits and workshops on filling out FAFSA and college application forms. In addition, the program has helped its members give back to their community. They recently participated in the I Love My Park Day, in which they cleaned a park in their community. They will soon be visiting students in Elementary Schools to help them with their school activities.

Senator Parker has long played an active role in the Flatbush Y. He has participated in a number of initiatives held by the center and has promoted its programs to his constituents. In addition, he has often organized events at the facility, including a "Free Flu Shot Days" screening for seniors. It is for this reason the Flatbush Y recognized him this year at their

Young at Heart and Men's Dinner.

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