

2017-J5588

Senate Resolution No. 5588

BY: Senator BRESLIN

HONORING Jahkeen Hoke upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the 2nd Annual Henry Johnson Award for Distinguished Community Service by the Albany District 369th Veterans Association on June 5, 2018

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon the people of the State of New York to recognize and acknowledge those within our midst who have made significant contributions to the quality of life therein; and

WHEREAS, From time to time this Legislative Body takes note of certain extraordinary individuals it wishes to recognize for their valued contributions to the success and progress of society and publicly acknowledge their endeavors which have enhanced the basic humanity among us all; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Jahkeen Hoke upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the 2nd Annual Henry Johnson Award for Distinguished Community Service by the Albany District 369th Veterans Association to be celebrated at the commemoration of Henry Johnson Day Event on Tuesday, June 5, 2018, at the Vet House in Albany, New York; and

WHEREAS, Jahkeen Hoke grew up in the South End of Albany, where he

attended Albany High School; after graduating, he earned his degree in business management from Moreland College, where he came up with the idea of 4th Family Inc., a not-for-profit organization which targets at-risk youth in the Capital Region through mentoring, STEM, and anti-incarceration programs; and

WHEREAS, The name 4th Family pays homage to what Jahkeen Hoke describes as the African concept of family: your first family is your immediate family, second family are your grandparents, third are your extended family, and the people and community you grew up with are your fourth family; and

WHEREAS, Jahkeen Hoke and his friend, John Scott, officially established 4th Family Inc. in 2011; for the last seven years, this vital organization has filled a void in Albany's economically disadvantaged, predominantly black neighborhoods by channeling kids' passion for sports to develop their interest in STEM fields which improves their earning potential; and

WHEREAS, Jahkeen Hoke and his partner realized they had to do something to make these kids competitive candidates in an increasingly STEM-dominated job market; Jahkeen and John, along with a team of young people built a vertical jump plate to improve their basketball game; and

WHEREAS, Sports analytics is not the only way 4th Family engages kids in STEM fields; volunteers explain the various employment opportunities that go into creating an athlete such as sports medicine doctors, nutritionists, trainers, business managers, and materials science engineers to develop sneakers; and

WHEREAS, 4th Family also implemented an anti-incarceration program

called Cherish the Chance; led by Jamel Smalls, strives to keep people out of prison through preventative work; the program gives people the opportunity to say, "Use my life as an example to do better in yours"; and

WHEREAS, Jahkeen Hoke and John Scott also engage the kids in 4th Family through a mentoring program; through workshops, performances, youth summits and field trips, they make sure the kids have a community and support within each other, placing straight-laced kids in the same groups as the rougher-edged ones; and

WHEREAS, Jahkeen Hoke leads his life by example and wants the best for the young people in his neighborhood; he truly believes the first step is to get off of the second floor and meet the kids where they are at and really understand what they go through when the streetlights come on; and

WHEREAS, For the first six years of 4th Family's existence, the organization had an all-volunteer staff, and Jahkeen Hoke donated significant funds from his own pockets each year for expenses; today, Jahkeen works full-time for the organization helping develop and expand 4th Family's funding with grant applications and fundraisers; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception, 4th Family has mentored approximately 8,000 students and 300 inmates; 55 students have successfully completed the STEM program, and about 30 of them are now in college; data has shown these kids have better attendance and less behavioral incidents; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those who enhance the well-being and vitality of their community and have shown a long and sustained commitment to excellence certainly have earned the

recognition and applause of all the citizens of this great Empire State;
now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Jahkeen Hoke upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the 2nd Annual Henry Johnson Award for Distinguished Community Service by the Albany District 369th Veterans Association on June 5, 2018; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Jahkeen Hoke.