



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elijah Reichlin-Melnick

Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick presents local restaurant with Empire Award for community service

ELIJAH REICHLIN-MELNICK September 30, 2021



SUFFERN, NY - Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick presented a New York State Senate Empire Award to Banks Dastine, owner of Diddy's Soul Food and Lounge in Suffern, recognizing his contributions to fostering a strong sense of community in Suffern and supporting frontline workers during the pandemic.

Diddy's Soul Food and Lounge has hosted various community events surrounding creating conversation and engagement between community members. These events include a meet

up between the Suffern police and the community during the height of civil rights activism in 2020. In addition, Diddy's has hosted business meet ups for local small businesses and donated food to local frontline workers and first responders during the course of the COVID19 pandemic.

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State Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick (D-Rockland/Westchester) said, "Mr. Dastine and Diddy's have been a strong force for building community in Suffern - not just in the past year during the COVID pandemic, but also throughout Mr. Dastine's career. It was an honor to provide Mr. Dastine and Diddy's Soul Food and Lounge with this Empire Award from the New York State Senate."

"I have failed a thousand times in building Diddy's Soul Food & Lounge but this award from NYS Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick reminded me to never give up, to never stop doing good," **Dastine said.** "Thank you from the bottom of my heart"

Banks Dastine is a Suffern resident and the owner of several small businesses while also serving the community as the Director of the Suffern Chamber of Commerce, a member of the Village of Suffern Zoning Board, and serving on the village's Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Board. Mr. Dastine has authored more than six self-help books including: Rethinking Your Purpose and Building Lasting Bonds.