



## Screaming Good Fun: The 2011 NYC DADS Halloween Party

On a dark Monday evening, dads and their kids came to the annual NYC DADS Halloween party, knowing they might get scared. And, sure enough, there was plenty of screaming coming from the haunted house that was set up in the already spooky Angel Orensanz space, a former synagogue, on the Lower East Side. And the witches, giant spiders and guy walking around in a *Halloween* Michael Myers mask, really kept the kids on their toes.

But, more than blood curdling screams, there were smiles, such as the one on Benjamin, a father from Harlem who brought his daughter, Lydia, to check out the event. Benjamin is a single father who's raised Lydia all her life, and he was excited to see all of the dads getting together, having a good time with their children. Pete, from Queens, is another dad who clearly gets a kick out of the holiday—after all, he was the guy in the Michael Myers mask. He brought his 9-year-old son, Justin, and a nephew to the event. Pete acknowledged all of the active dads of his generation around him; "We just got tired of how we were raised," he said. "And we've decided to be there for our kids."

Not that it's easy. Lawrence, a dad from the Bronx, was with his nine-year-old son Zahmir, who looked great in a beefed-up Superman costume, with his chest popping out. Lawrence admits fatherhood can be tough, most of all when you realize all of the things you can't provide your child. At least, on this night, Zahmir got to be Superman. Little did he know that tonight was part of his father's efforts to be a super dad.

But, of course, the dads who came to the Halloween party don't, in fact, have super powers. They're just being good dads because they're being there for their kids. It's something that Fatherhood Services Coordinator, Alan Farrell, could appreciate. As the head of NYC Dads- The Mayor's Fatherhood Initiative, Farrell was on hand to honor fathers who participate in their kids' lives. "Nights like this are part of the Fatherhood Initiative's efforts to create memorable moments between fathers and their children," Farrell said. "This event provides families an opportunity to enjoy one another and reminds dads that they don't have to be superhuman but they do have to show up. The dads here this evening have done just that and we celebrate their commitment."

Benjamin, the dad from Harlem who was attending his first NYC DADS event, was particularly happy to hear about the upcoming NYC DADS Holiday party, which takes place closer to his home, at the Museum of the City of New York. We'll see you there in December, Benjamin—and all of the other dads who are there for their children.