Ho! Ho! Ho! The 2011 NYC DADS Holiday Party

Some dads do, and some dads don't. The NYC DADS Holiday party is a time and place when the dads who do—show up, provide for their children, and invest in their kids' lives—are celebrated. There were 400 people in attendance, so there was plenty of good cheer at the December party that takes place at the Museum of the City of New York, with book give-aways, a raffle, arts and crafts, pretzels and sweets, live music and, of course, Santa.

And yet, despite all the fun, there were plenty of dads on hand who were talking about taking their responsibilities seriously. With the museum decorated in festive greens and reds, and while NYC DADS perennial favorite, Louie, played playful songs as children danced in front of the stage, Diandre, a dad from Queens, was talking about how his kids "keep me going."

With his 3-month old baby girl on his lap, Diandre proudly asked, "See how she's studying you?" You'd think he was a new dad, but this is his fifth child. "Each one is different," Diandre said. "She didn't ask to be brought into the world. I brought her here, and so she's my responsibility. I take that seriously."

Alex, a dad from Staten Island, echoed Diandre's words about stepping up to fatherhood, which he has done by raising his 12-year-old son, Alex, a rising baseball star (and honor student). Alex Sr. had an ear-to-ear grin, and admitted that he was thrilled to see all of the other dads in attendance "looking for the opportunity to connect."

NYC Fatherhood Coordinator Alan Farrell, standing in an auditorium surrounded by dads, was appreciative of the work that went into putting the party together. "Thanks to the entire HRA team, this

evening's party is a great success," he said, looking around the room. "The 400 dads and families that came out tonight are a testament to men's willingness to be actively engaged in the lives of their children and the City's commitment to supporting their efforts to be good dads."

While a reindeer and snowman walked amongst the crowd, receiving hugs from kids and high-fives from dads, the only thing cuter were two little girls, one with a knit hat and the other with a bow in her hair, and dressed in immaculate, matching white and red sweaters. Both girls were being carried this way and that by their dad, George, who was adamant about how important it is for dads to be active in their kids' lives.

Maybe that's because George himself, who lives in Washington Heights, didn't have a dad around to take care of him. He agrees that he's making up for that when he says, "I am always trying to bring them to activities. I love seeing them grow."