



# The Gift that Matters



**“THIS DAY IS A GIFT,” SAID ERROL GREENE, FATHER OF TWO.**

He, and 400 other guests, came to Gracie Mansion Thursday to celebrate the 4th Annual NYC DADS Matter Awards, which honors ten men who have overcome obstacles and become outstanding fathers. Greene was an honoree in 2011, the first year of the award. [The Mayor’s Fatherhood Initiative](#) launched in 2010 with four goals: to remove barriers that fathers may face in interacting with City agencies; to make all City agencies as “father friendly” as possible; to assist in the creation of memorable moments between fathers and their children; and to support fathers as they increase their capacity to be good dads.

“I am so happy for the fathers who are going to be honored today. It’s going to make them feel great,” Greene said. “Coming to the Mayor’s house, be honored for being a dad and get a meal? Can’t beat that.”

This year’s event, hosted by Mayor Bill de Blasio and First Lady Chirlane McCray, honored ten dads from across the city: Mohammed Akram, Barrington Barrett, Terrence Brummel, Robert Graham, Mynor Escobar, Jason Greene, Marco Martinez, Bruce Parker, Abraham Padin and Andre Harrison.

Mayor de Blasio spoke about the difficulties these men have risen above to be where they are now. Mr. Harrison, from Staten Island, has had to raise his three sons as a single father. He has made it his purpose, having written a book on the subject, and starting an organization that supports dads. Mr. Escobar became a father when he was just 16-years-old. He has climbed up from being a dishwasher to a chef, and has overseen his children’s education and overall development. All of the fathers honored have made incredible strides forward to make for better lives for their kids, which everyone under the tent could appreciate.

“The most profound thing I have ever done is to raise our children,” said Mayor de Blasio. “It has been a sacred calling.” The Mayor and First Lady both spoke about their own fathers as well as their experiences as parents. They emphasized the advantages of relying on each other through difficulties they faced as parents, as well as the joy of sharing important experiences together. Mayor de Blasio faced challenges of having an absent father while the First Lady praised her father for being there for her even if he was not outwardly affectionate.

The audience laughed knowingly when Mayor de Blasio joked that he and the First Lady were “recovering middle school parents.” He announced that he plans on guaranteeing free after school programs for middle school students in the next two years.

The crowd was treated to hot dogs, hamburgers and other picnic fare. Terrence Brummel, one of the 2014 honorees, seemed to be smiling the entire evening. “This is great,” Mr. Brummel said. “We’re mentoring other men to be better dads. That is what this is all about.”