



# FIT DADS FIT KIDS

NYCDADS Mayor's Fatherhood Initiative

"I've got to lose a few pounds," said a dad who clearly didn't need to lose a thing. About 6 feet tall and all muscle, holding his daughter in his big arms, this was a dad who clearly kept fit. Which was great to see because NYC DADS is all about dads keeping themselves and their children healthy with our "Fit Dads Fit Kids" initiative. And that's why we were in Brownsville for Old Timers weekend to promote the good word.

Brownsville Old Timers is the block party of the year, but this summer's event was really significant, because it marked one year since the passing of Greg "Jocko" Jackson, a pillar of the community, a dad of nine, and a father figure to the entire community. It was a special honor for NYC DADS to be on hand with its Fit Dads Fit Kids initiative, encouraging fathers to be there for their children in mind, spirit and body.

NYC DADS gave out blue Fit Dads Fit Kids backpacks with wrist bands and water bottles to the children and their dads, while basketball games were played in the recreation center and on the outside courts. Included in the bags were HRA's Cut the Junk booklet on better eating, as well as DYCD's Summer Fun Guide, filled with ideas for families to get outside and be active in the city. And HRA sponsored the distribution of new \$25 gift cards to pay for annual Parks recreation center memberships to a select number of young fathers. "This was a great multi-agency collaboration between three members of the Mayor's Fatherhood initiative," said Alan Farrell, the Fatherhood Services Coordinator who was on hand to speak with dads and distribute backpacks.

Mr. Jackson's powerful spirit was in the air, as the Brownsville Recreation Center filled up with old timers and children alike. Mr. Jackson had transformed the center into a haven for young men and women to get off the streets and use fitness as recreation as well as finding direction. And so it was truly heartening to see the respect and camaraderie engendered by the current head of the center, Jerry Childs, a father himself, who now holds the torch, as he walked through the crowd. He proudly pointed out the young men who have become Brownsville Rec regulars, and whom he promises he keeps on their toes, especially when he's on the court playing ball.

We're confident that, in Mr. Childs' hands, Brownsville Recreation Center will continue to be a beacon for the community.