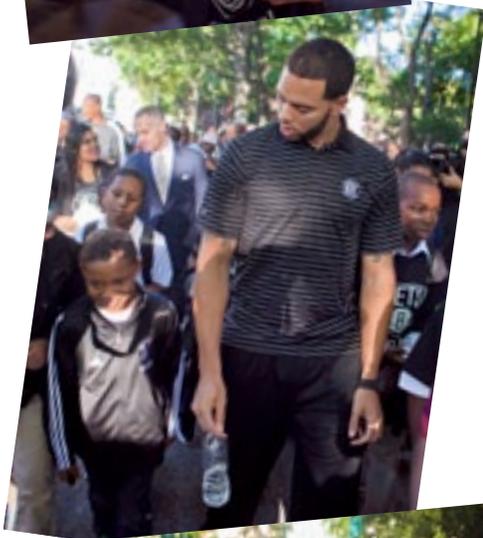




# DADS TAKE YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL DAY

*(and Every Day)*



Deron Williams, the super star point guard for the new Brooklyn Nets, knows how to drive to the hoop. But there's a drive, he says, that he values more; it's the one he takes when he brings his kids to school. The father of four was on hand for Dads Take Your Child to School Day, to help support all of the other dads in the city who want to do the right thing: be there for their children.

Deron walked with city leaders and about a hundred kids and their fathers from Brooklyn's Ingersoll Community Center to PS 67, where he told the gathering of what it was like for him to grow up without a dad in Texas. It was especially hard on what they called "Dads and Donuts" day, an event a lot like this one, in which fathers were encouraged to be present in their children's lives. "It bugged me," he said, recalling what it was like to see the other kids with their dads. "It put some hurt in my heart."



Deron is breaking that cycle by being very active in his kids' life. So is his teammate, Jerry Stackhouse, father of three, who was all smiles when he spoke with NYC DADS. "Kids need both parents," he said. "For me, there's no downside to being a dad. It's all good."

Of course, you don't have to be a professional ball player to be a great dad—in fact, when you don't have the resources, it makes the job all the more challenging. But the reward is the same. Miguel, a dad at PS 67 who's been a consistent presence in his kids' lives, spoke about the importance of "sacrifice;" in fact, he is enlisting with the military in order to be able to provide for his children, and defend our country.



Indeed, an army of dads gathered on this day. With 350 schools and Head Start programs across the city involved in the event, whether it was a gathering of five dads or fifty, reports came in from every borough of emotional, powerful moments in which dads were there—and committed to be there in the future.

Back at PS 67, NYCHA Commissioner John Rhea spoke forcefully about being a single parent himself and the value he put in talking with his children when he takes them to school each day. Assuring dads he had "their back," he reminded the crowd that kids without dads at home are twice as likely to drop out from school.



This day was a celebration. The Nets gave out backpacks to the kids. Nets CEO Brett Yormark went a step further, and gave every kid at PS 67 two tickets to a Nets home games. There were plenty of happy faces in the crowd. But Education Chancellor Dennis Walcott, the head of all hall monitors, was on hand to remind everyone that the Nets had practice that day, and that the gathering would have to break up soon. But he was only pretending to the scold: he told the Nets players not to worry about missing practice. "I'll be writing you late notes," he said.

Walcott applauded all the dads who deserved a pat on the back, and he reminded everyone "to make this an ongoing thing throughout the whole school year."