All Stars Project names former participant to be youngest board member

Nonprofit, which has programs in Newark and Jersey City, helps at-risk teenagers

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In 2011, Wadnes Castelly was a graduate of the All Stars Project — a national nonprofit organization that sponsors innovative afterschool development programs for inner-city youth.

On Monday, he was elected to sit on its board of directors.

Gabrielle Kurlander, the CEO of ASP, said Castelly will help the group in many ways.

"We are proud to have Wadnes on our national board," she said. "His contributions as an alumni leader who has gone through our performance-based, after-school development programs will help the All Stars further innovate our youth engagement strategies. Additionally, Wadnes’ expertise in social and digital media will be very valuable as we expand our impact across the country."

Castelly, a first-generation Haitian American whose family moved from Newark to Irvington when he was a child, said he is grateful for the help the program gave him as he grew up — and became aware of the lack of resources in the township, especially for education, compared with more affluent communities.

When he was 17, rather than continuing to play football for the high school team, Castelly opted to sign up for the All Stars Project of New Jersey’s Development School for Youth program. He had become intrigued by DSY through his older sister, Jessica, who was in the program years prior. He went on to graduate from Rutgers Business School in 2016 and now works at Spotify.

At 26, Castelly is the youngest member of the board.

"I am honored and excited to be a member of the board of directors for the All Stars Project," he said. "As a young person born in Newark to Haitian parents, I didn’t have a linear pathway to Corporate America. I’m grateful to the All Stars Project’s investment in me that helped position me to be where I am today. Now, it’s time for me to pay it forward and share my perspective and insights to develop ideas to grow the All Stars Project and equip young people with the skills needed to thrive in the digital and technology era."

As part of his DSY experience, Castelly earned a paid summer internship with AIG in Lower Manhattan, where he felt welcomed and learned firsthand many of the skills needed to be successful in a professional business setting. Skills he later used in marketing internships he had during his college years at Rutgers Business School with the Brooklyn Nets/Barclays Center and Showtime, and later as an employee at HYPEBEAST and the New York Times.

Now, after more than a year at Spotify, he said he is continuing to advance his career at the intersection of four things that excite him: marketing, technology, business and philanthropy.

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