

Transcript: Mayor Eric Adams, Made by Dyslexia Founder Kate Griggs Appear Live on Fox 5's "Good Day New York"

June 9, 2022

Rosanna Scotto: Joining us right now, Mayor Eric Adams and Kate Griggs, CEO of Made By Dyslexia, an organization whose purpose is to understand, value, support dyslexia. Nice to have you both with us this morning. Mr. Mayor, when did you realize that you had dyslexia?

Mayor Eric Adams: Not until college. First, good morning to you both. But it was not until college that I realized that I had dyslexia – struggled all the way through K through 12. And once I learned and received the support I needed, I went from being a D student to being on the dean's list. And it was an amazing transformation. That's why what Kate is doing in her organization just means so much to the large number of students and what we are doing here in New York City.

Scotto: Kate, what are we going to do differently, because a lot of times the kids with dyslexia go undetected. Is there going to be some standardized test for the entire class to take, so you know where they are in the spectrum?

Kate Griggs, Founder and CEO of Made by Dyslexia: I think the first thing is to help teachers to understand dyslexia and help every teacher to understand, because there are one in five kids in every classroom that are dyslexic. So every teacher is a teacher of dyslexic children. And the free training that we've produced, that it's amazing that every single teacher in the city is going to do it, will enable teachers to be able to spot dyslexia and support the kids in the classroom, but also flag up if they need extra help. And it's about spotting strengths, as well as the challenges, because dyslexia is very, very much about strengths and those are very vital thinking skills the future needs.

Bianca Peters: Yeah, they certainly are. Now, Mayor Adams, this is not the only issue facing kids in school today, it's also gun violence. Yesterday you testified before Congress regarding common sense gun laws. How did that go?

Mayor Adams: I believe that I am optimistic. Let's just say that I'm cautiously optimistic. What's fascinating is that our city and country is divided into three parts. You have the far left that believe those who carry dangerous guns should not be held accountable. You have the far right who are stating that we should not have any common sense gun laws. And then stuck in the middle are the everyday Americans and New Yorkers. We are stuck between the gunfight, between these extremes. It is time to hear from the overwhelming number of New Yorkers that state they want safe streets.

Mayor Adams: And this program of dyslexia is part of that. 30% of our inmates, according to a 2014 report from the DOE, 30% are dyslexic. This is feeding crime in our cities. And so we deal with good, smart gun laws, good programs that prevent children from going into crime. That is the winning scenario that we're going to do in this administration.

Peters: And speaking about New Yorkers, we have some of the strongest gun laws in the country, yet it seems like now we are so lax on people that carry guns. Time and time again, they walk free until one of those guns is used to kill someone. So I think the conversation can't be left out bail reform. Correct?

Mayor Adams: Well, it's more than that. And I share that over and over again. There are many rivers I feed the sea of violence. Given judges the discretion to keep dangerous people inside, that is one of the rivers. But there's more that we need to do. We have to get our court systems up and operating. We're not putting dangerous people on trial. We must make sure that judges use the powers they currently have. And I think far too many of them are not using the powers. And then our laws must be strengthened.

Mayor Adams: And so it's a combination that is producing the sea of violence that we are witnessing. But we are winning. Let's be clear: 3,000 guns off the street, crime of shootings have decreased, homicides have decreased. We are moving in the right direction. And New Yorkers will see the results.

Scotto: Mayor, I know that you are trying to think outside the box to bring down crime. You've appointed a gun violence czar. And he seems to be getting a lot of heat because of his past. How do you rectify that? What will you do?

Mayor Adams: Well, number one, we have to stay focused. The reason I brought him on is not because of the heat of his past, it's because people are carrying heat. That heat is called guns. And you want someone that has the experience like Mr. Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell has the experience. I've known A.T. for over 30 something years. And I know his commitment, his dedication, and he understands how to get on the ground. And that's what we need. We don't need Mother Teresa here. We need someone that has gone through some troubling times just as I have to go in and talk to those people who are living the life that we live. That is how we reach those who are on the ground.

Scotto: I know you talked about it just now, bail reform, revolving door of justice. I'm sure you're aware of what's happening in California. They've recalled a district attorney who they believe has not been tough on crime. Can you ever foresee that happening here in Manhattan, because we read in the paper every day about somebody who stabbed somebody, had a gun and was let out on no bail?

Mayor Adams: Well, I believe that the voters spoke during the election. I'm going to continue to work as a partner with all of the DAs. We meet, we talk, I point out the things that I believe we should be doing differently. And they point out the things that they believe. And so I think the entire country and city realize that Americans and New Yorkers have stated they want a safe city and cities to live in. And I'm going to produce that here. And I think we need to produce that all over the country.

Scotto: I know you talked about New York City, our justice system being a laughing stock. Do you still feel that way? And I know that you're saying you try to get all the DAs on board, but are they in our city?

Mayor Adams: First, the laughing stock. Yes, I do. I believe bad people in this city believe that they could commit crimes, openly carry guns and shoot them. We see the broad daylight shootings. People are not even wearing masks anymore. There's a level of comfort to possess a gun, use a gun and don't feel as though you're going to be held accountable for that. That can't continue in this city. The police officers are doing their job. And I need everyone that's part of the criminal justice, of the body of criminal justice, to also do their job. And I think that the DAs are going to do that. They're

realizing that we have to turn the corner on crime, and that includes keeping dangerous people off our streets. And we have not done a good job in doing so on all levels of the criminal justice systems.

Peters: Is that what you are hearing from the DAs that they will do and take steps so that we're not considered a laughing stock? Because I know you're saying, hey, yes, they're realizing it, but what are the steps that are being taken to turn this around?

Mayor Adams: Sitting in the room. It starts with a conversation. We don't want to be gangs of the criminal justice system, where we are fighting each other, not willing to talk to each other. It's having very real conversations and partnerships. Look what we did up in the Bronx, took down a dangerous gang. Look what we did the other day, took down a major gun trafficker that we removed a large number of guns off the road. So you are seeing those partnerships. The district attorney here in Brooklyn, he was able to take down three major gangs. And we saw with the Gang Suppression Unit, once you take down those grain deal gangs, you see an unbelievable drop in crime. There's a small number of bad people that continue to leave the criminal justice system and create crimes. The person that shot Daniel on the train, he had nine prior arrests. Think about that. Do you look at all of these individuals that are causing this crime and they have the same profile, very dangerous repeated offenses, and in many cases repeated gun crimes?

Scotto: Mayor, before you go, I know you have a big gathering with the governors today at Penn Station, what's going on?

Mayor Adams: Well, we're going to talk about putting out the RFP for the development of Penn Station, something that was long needed, and it's part of our overall plan. But I would be remiss if I don't say thanks to Kate and what she's doing. They're going to hold a major dyslexia conference right here in New York City. Assemblyman [Robert] Carroll, has been a partner in doing so who introduced us to many of these proper ways of dealing with dyslexia. This is a major moment that we are having that we are going after the young people who have been left aside. Kate, so much for what you're doing, a real partner. This is a global fight that we are having to save our children to prevent the crime. And we look forward to the announcement today at Penn Station.

Scotto: I'm so sure so many parents will be happy about this and so many children will be happy about this, because they'll get extra help. Mayor, thank you so much for being on Good Day New York this morning. And Kate Griggs we appreciate you too.

Griggs: Thank you.

###