

DAVE PARDONS SIX . 'I FEEL REBORN,' SEZ IMMIG EX-OFFENDER NOW LIVING AMERICAN DREAM

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Byline: BY KEVIN DEUTSCH DAILY NEWS WRITER

Body

A FORMER Bronx crack addict- turned-CUNY bigwig was one of six immigrants Gov. Paterson **pardoned** yesterday in an effort to save them from deportation.

Mario Benitez, 58, the assistant director of finance for City University of New York's Graduate School and University Center, oversees a budget of more than \$60 million and is a respected community leader in Riverdale.

But the native of the Dominican Republic was still considered "deportable" under federal immigration law because of his 1988 drug conviction. The father of four was overjoyed by news of his **pardon**.

"**I feel reborn**," said the **ex**-Navy man, who earned an accounting degree and passed the CPA exam while serving seven years at Attica.

"If you work hard and do the right thing, good things come your way. **I**m very happy."

Also **pardoned** was Kevin Auyeung, 32, of Brooklyn, who founded a cellular communications company after serving a five-year stint for a 1996 robbery.

Because of his felony conviction, immigration agents placed Auyeung in an immigration detention center in 2006. He was forced to close his thriving business but can legally work again thanks to the **pardon**.

"**I**m proud of him," said Auyeung's father, who bought his son a beginner's computer manual and a Chinese-English dictionary to study in prison.

Paterson also issued **pardons** for Darshini Ramsaran, a former Queens resident who is being held in an immigration detention center; Sanjay Broomfield of Long Island; Marlon Oscar Powell of Westchester County, and Deborah Salako-Nation, formerly of Westchester County. He also granted clemency to June Benson, 44, who served 20 years on an accessory-to-rape charge.

Paterson said his **pardons** were meant to address "shortcomings" in inflexible federal immigration laws.

Graphic

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Gov. Paterson

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