

January 21, 2010

## Owen Dolen hosts 3 Kings celebration

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Children dressed as shepherds, townspeople and angels participated in a Three Kings celebration at the Owen Dolen Recreation Center on Friday, January 8. Seniors played the three wise men.

The Bronx Council on the Arts, the Parks Department's Arts, Culture

and Fun series, the Association of Merchants and Business Professionals of Westchester Square, the Bronx Business Alliance, the Learning Disabilities Support Center of New York and the 2010 United States Census hosted the holiday event.

Children and teens from Owen Dolen's after-

school program joined children from the R.E.A.C.H. specials-needs program to reenact the Nativity. Owen Dolen has hosted the celebration four years in a row.

"Three Kings Day always draws a lot of people," Owen Dolen manager Kathy Walker said. "I put out 108 chairs and every one was taken. My afterschool program coordinator Brigitte Lozada and I worked on this for two months."

The Nativity reenactment was a hit. Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus welcomed the Star of Bethlehem while villagers, angels and shepherds looked on. Three participants from Owen Dolen's senior program entered with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The reenactment helped some 40 children imagine a better world.

When it ended, the children were asked what they'd do to change the world in 2010 if they were kings and queens. They vowed to bring American

troops home, build more hospitals, cure swine flu, fight HIV/AIDS, cure cancer, beat hunger and find shelter for everyone.

The children accepted toys donated by the Bronx Business Alliance. Westchester Square merchant leader John Bonizio told the crowd about the planned reconstruction of Owen Dolen.

The Parks Department and the Bronx Council on the Arts plan to sponsor more and more arts and culture events for children in collaboration with Westchester Square merchants and resident groups.

"Our programs are geared towards helping young people develop their talents," BCA managing director Deirdre Scott said. "I'm really proud that this Three Kings Day celebration is inter-ethnic and inter-generational. We are proud to be part of the Owen Dolen family."



Photos by Walter Pofeldt

Nikolas Mercado performs at the Owen Dolen Recreation Center Three Kings Day celebration on Friday, January 8.



Dancers from Cultra y Tradicion perform at the Three Kings Day celebration at Owen Dolen.