

BRONX *Times Reporter*

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Fair @ the Square draws thousands to fun-filled day

BY BILL WEISBROD

When Joe Regina, a key organizer of the Fair @ the Square, was asked to come up with a highlight for the day, he had a hard time naming just one.

But eventually he settled on the event's music diversity, which he felt played a large role in the success of the third annual fair.

"I've never heard so many types of music, all these multicultural performances in one place," Regina said. "You had a mixture of rock, reggae, doo-wop, hip hop. To me, that was amazing."

Over 5,000 people came to Westchester Square on Saturday, May 14 for the third annual Fair @ the Square. The fair was presented by the Westchester Square Merchants Association, the Bronx Business Alliance, the Bronx Council on the Arts and over 20 corporate sponsors.

In addition to the all-day concert, fair-goers enjoyed rides, carnival games,

food, vendors and arts activities. Attendance-wise, the 2011 Fair @ the Square was about five times the size of the previous two.

To Regina, who is program manager of the Westchester Square Merchants Association, the event was a look into the future of the Bronx. All groups and ethnicities were represented, local businesses were being supported, and children mobbed the square.

"I've been around the square my while life and I have never, ever seen that kind of activity with everyone coming together," Regina, 56, said. "Even the Bangladeshi community partnered up with us and displayed their traditions, their music and dance. Westchester Square is a microcosm of not just the Bronx but the whole city. I'm at a loss for words to come up with to express my elation about how this all paid off."

The threat of rain cast a



Photo courtesy Joe Regina

Above (l-r) Senator Jeff Klein, Westchester Square Merchants president Greg Perry, Westchester Square BID Steering Committee chairman John Bonizio, Molly Rokasy of News12, Councilman Jimmy Vacca, Westchester Square Merchants program manager Joe Regina, Ray Raimundi of News12, CB10 district manager Kenneth Kearns, Bronx Council on the Arts executive director Deirdre Scott pose at the Fair @ the Square.

literal cloud over the event, but the sky never opened up. Nevertheless, it was a banner day for business on and around Westchester Square.

"I heard from a couple of businesses in the area

and they thought it was big success," said Merchants Association vice president Joseph Lizzul. "They had all had a lot of patrons coming in and asking about different services."

The next major mile-

stone for Westchester Square is having its Business Improvement District application approved. Regina is also a member of the proposed BID's steering committee. He believes having a BID will help busi-

nesses in the Square work together for the common goal of boosting commerce, much like the fair did.

Regina said he expects official BID approval this summer.