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Dancers give students a glimpse of their culture

Posted by the Asbury Park Press on 10/27/07

BY **HARTRIONO B. SASTROWARDOYO**
STAFF WRITER

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A group of people recently got to experience some Spanish culture — all without leaving Russell O. Brackman Middle School in Barnegat.

As part of Ocean County Library's observance of October as Hispanic Heritage Month, Old Bridge-based Alborada Spanish Dance Theatre on Oct. 10 presented a performance incorporating the various dance forms, including folkloric, escuela bolera, classical and flamenco, at the Barnegat Boulevard North school.

The library system had previously hosted the dance troupe in Brick and Point Pleasant.

As Carlos Revollar, the troupe's music director, strummed his guitar, the stage erupted in a splash of red, white, and blue skirts with dancers performing the sevillanas, a festive folk dance, accompanied by the rhythmic clapping from another performer.

"The clapping is part of the band," as much an integral part as the instrument playing, singing or dancing, said assistant director Gisele Assi.



(STAFF PHOTO: BRYAN FERREIRA)

Performers from the Alborada Spanish Dance Theatre dance at Russell O. Brackman Middle School in Barnegat in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month.

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Assi added that the performer looks at the feet of the dancer so they can clap in the same rhythm.

"The footwork is very important," Assi said. "It's not like with tap shoes. The men wear boots with a slight high heel and special soles with nails."

As Revollar's guitar reached a crescendo, the crowd showed its appreciation with a shout of "Ole!"

The countrywide observance of the Hispanic culture began in 1968 as National Hispanic Heritage Week, then expanded to a monthlong celebration 20 years later to the period between Sept. 15 and Oct. 15.

That particular time period was chosen because Sept. 15 is the independence anniversary for five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Two other countries in that region also have their independence days within that period — Mexico on Sept. 16 and Chile on Sept. 18, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The federal agency also notes that Hispanics comprise the largest ethnic group in the United States, with a population of 42.7 million as of 2005, and is the fastest-growing minority group.

Hartriono B. Saswardoyo: (609) 978-4581 or harts@app.com

STORYCHAT



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What a beautiful performance. The only thing that would have made it better would have been an "adios" from Superintendent McMahon as he was leaving the district forever!

Posted by: sbs52 on Sat Oct 27, 2007 8:36 am



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