

Latin dance program returns to the Boys & Girls Club

Charlestown Patriot Bridge | August 21, 2008 | by Dan Murphy



PHOTO 1 CAPTION: Back (left to right): Estfania Giraldo, Tanya Queen, Cynthia Lopez, Veronica Robles and Janise Queen. Front: Alondra Tirado.



PHOTO 2 CAPTION: Participants in the DANCE CAMERA ACTION! program at the Boys & Girls Club.

In September, local youth can learn the mariachi, salsa and other Latin dance styles when DANCE CAMERA ACTION! returns to the Charlestown Boys & Girls Club.

The program, which is about to enter its fourth year, is taught by Mexican television personality and recording artist Veronica Robles and funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council YouthReach initiative. It will be divided into eight workshops, and participating 10- to 19-year-old girls will learn dance techniques from a particular Latin American country while dressed in costumes from the region. The children will also learn about the history and customs of each region as part of each workshop. Robles added that three workshops would feature guest dance instructors who will also serve as mentors to the participating teens and one workshop would be a two-week “salsa special.”

In June, the program will culminate in a dance recital at the Boys & Girls Club, where participants will perform two songs from each workshop.

Robles said some teens who were initially intimidated by dance learned to love it as the program progresses.

“Some teens were a little shy in the beginning, but once they get into it, they really start to come out of their shells,” Robles said.

Alondra Tirado, age 12, joined the program during its first year and said she favors Peruvian dance. She hopes one day to visit the Latin American countries that the program has introduced to her.

"I always wanted to see other places and learn about their cultures," Tirado said.

Janice Queen, 14, got involved with the program two years ago when she began assisting Robles in designing costumes. Although Queen had never danced before, Robles soon recruited her for the program.

And Queen also hopes to follow in Robles footsteps one day.

"I would like to teach other kids dance," Queen said.

Participants from the DANCE CAMERA ACTION! Program will perform on Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 1, at the 24th Annual Bread and Roses Festival on the Lawrence Common in Lawrence, Mass. For more information, contact Jim Beauchesne at Lawrence Heritage Park at 978-794-1655 or via e-mail: at jim.beauchesne@state.ma.us or breadandroses99@hotmail.com.

To learn more about DANCE CAMERA ACTION!, contact Veronica Robles at the Charlestown Boys & Girls Club at 617-242-1775 ext. 251.