

LOCAL NEWS

BUFFALO



Charles Lewis/Buffalo News

Jesenia Gonzalez, of Buffalo, performs with the Latin Souls dance group Thursday in the Central Library in downtown Buffalo during ceremonies kicking off National Hispanic Heritage Month.

Hispanic Heritage Month celebrated

BY DEIDRE WILLIAMS

NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Hispanic Heritage Month in Western New York kicked off Thursday in the Buffalo & Erie County Central Library downtown with a performance tour taking attendees around the world.

The band Grupo Variedad took the audience on a musical journey to Colombia with a cumbia selection and then to Cuba with the sounds of the cha-cha.

Students from a fourth-grade bilingual class at Frank A. Sedita School 30 performed several songs, including "The Girl From Ipanema," a Brazilian favorite. Youngsters Yaiza Cirino, Destiny Pagan, Damiliz Parilla, Marian Rivas and Samuel Moldanado played the bells to the rendition.

And teenage dancers Betzabel Medina and Jesenia Gonzalez treated the audience to a bomba performance. Rooted in African tradition, the bomba features dancers moving to the rhythm of

floor drums. The art form was created by African slaves in Puerto Rico as an outlet.

"They forgot about slavery when they danced [the bomba]," Gonzalez said.

Hispanic Heritage Month recognizes the contributions of Hispanic Americans in the United States and celebrates their legacy and culture.

Dozens of people attended the noon ceremony Thursday to kick off the monthlong celebration, including community leaders, Erie County Executive Chris Collins, Buffalo Mayor Byron W. Brown and a representative from Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's office.

Gilbert Melendez, an honor student at Hutchinson-Central Technical High School, recited the Pledge of Allegiance in Spanish and English.

The local celebration coincides with the national observance that concludes Oct. 15 and was organized by the Hispanic Heritage Council of WNY, which is about a

year old.

Activities taking place include a logo contest for students in Buffalo Public Schools to design a symbol or emblem to represent the Hispanic Heritage Council of WNY. The winner will be recognized at a Hispanic heritage program Oct. 14 at School 30.

The national observance began in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon B. Johnson and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period starting Sept. 15, a special day in five Latin American countries.

It marks the anniversary of the independence of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua from Spain in 1821.

For a list of local Hispanic Heritage Month events and activities, visit www.facebook.com/HispanicHeritageWNY.

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Hispanics set to celebrate heritage

Hispanic Heritage Month in Western New York kicks off at noon Thursday with a celebration at the Buffalo & Erie County Central Library downtown. The national observance of Latino culture concludes Oct. 15.

Local events will be taking place throughout the month to commemorate the occasion, including a logo contest for students in Buffalo Public Schools to design a symbol or emblem to represent the Hispanic Heritage Council of WNY. The winner will be recognized at a Hispanic heritage program Oct. 14 in Frank A. Sedita School 30.

Thursday's kickoff will be held in the library's lobby and will feature community leaders and guitar playing, performances and presentations by Sedita students.

Other events include:

- Opening reception for the art exhibit "(im)possible Interventions" by Micaela Vivero, 7 to 9

p.m. Friday in El Museo, 91 Allen St.

- Latin Jazz Project at Curtain Up, 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. Friday in Shea's Performing Arts Center's grand lobby, 646 Main St.

- "Viva Mexico; Viva Buffalo" exhibit opening, 6 to 9 p.m. Friday in Casa De Arte Buffalo-Cuernavaca, 141 Elmwood Ave.

- Potluck and Latin Music, 7 to 9 p.m. Saturday in El Buen Amigo, 114 Elmwood Ave.

- Hispanic Boat Ride, 5:30 p.m. Sunday at Erie Basin Marina.

- Latin Movie Night, 7 p.m. Sept. 21 in El Buen Amigo, 114 Elmwood Ave.

- Hispanic Heritage Presentation by Miguel Santos, noon Sept. 22 in the Central Library downtown.

- Spanish Movie with English subtitles, 7 p.m. Sept. 23 in El Buen Amigo, 114 Elmwood Ave.

- Hispanics United of Buffalo's Hispanic Heritage Awards Dinner,

6 p.m. to midnight Oct. 1 in the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center.

- Hispanic Heritage Celebration in Albright-Knox Art Gallery with tours, music and food, 1 to 10 p.m. Oct. 7.

- Hispanic Heritage Program, 12:30 p.m. Oct. 14 in the Sedita School, 21 Lowell St.

- Hispanic Heritage Celebration featuring Wendell Rivera and the Latin Jazz Project, 7 p.m. Oct. 14 in Kleinhans Music Hall, 3 Symphony Circle.

- National Latino AIDS Awareness Day sponsored by Grupo Ministerial, 3 to 6 p.m. Oct. 14 in the Belle Center, 104 Maryland St.

- Hispanic Women's League Luncheon, 11 a.m. Oct. 15 in the Hyatt Regency Buffalo, Two Fountain Plaza.

For more information, contact Casimiro Rodriguez at 912-3489.

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THE PICTURE PAGE

ON THE WEB: For more photos, go to galleries.buffalonews.com



Celebrating with music: National Hispanic Heritage Month got under way Thursday in the Central Library. At left, students from Frank A. Sedita School 30 play "The Girl From Ipanema" on bells. At right, Jose Rodriguez, on guitar, and Grupo Variedad perform Latin music.

Photos by Derek Gee/Buffalo News