



Bronx Children's Museum event with Justice Sotomayor

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This past Saturday BronxMama had the chance to attend an event to honor Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor! Those in attendance included Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Congressman Jose E. Serrano, Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr, and Sonia Monzano a.k.a. "Maria" from Sesame Street.

The Bronx Children's Museum's Dream Big Initiative culminated on Saturday, August 14, with a special event on the campus of Lehman College where Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor was the guest of honor.

Children from the Point and BronxWorks shared their creations (which employed a variety of media, including photography, painting, printmaking, collage, and puppetry) with Associate Justice Sotomayor when she participated in museum workshops on the college campus. Lehman co-sponsored the event along with BCM and The Point. Justice Sotomayor assured the children that no dream was too big if they worked hard and stayed focused. "Your library card is your passport to anywhere you want to go," she said, adding, "Tell your parents Justice Sotomayor told you to pester them to take you to the library."

After remarks by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Congressman Jose E. Serrano and Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr., the Justice and the children were treated to an afternoon of music led by renowned jazz composer and musician Arturo O'Farrill.

Borough President Diaz got a big hand when he said, "Jennifer Lopez, we've got another J Lo from the Bronx — a Justice of Law and Order."

In honor of Justice Sotomayor, the Arturo O'Farrill Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra performed "A Wise Latina" which was commissioned by Symphony Space and the Bronx Museum of the Arts. The orchestra was joined by musicians from the Celia Cruz High School of Music.

Sonia Manzano, who plays Maria on **Sesame Street**, was mistress of ceremonies for the day's activities, which included sing-alongs in both Spanish and English. Ms. Manzano added. "Today is about Dreaming Big and celebrating the accomplishments of another Sonia from the Bronx, the Honorable Sonia Sotomayor. Today is also about the importance of early childhood education," said Ms. Manzano. "I know, from being on Sesame Street for so many years, that children are born with the desire to learn and explore. It is our job as adults to keep their enthusiasm for learning alive. A children's museum does exactly that. I wish the Bronx Children's

Museum had been in existence when I was growing up in the Bronx. I look forward to joining Justice Sotomayor at the ground breaking ceremony,” she added.

“The Dream Big initiative is a step towards a permanent home for the Bronx Children’s Museum that will serve and enrich the community for years to come. Mayor Bloomberg said, “Today, we also celebrate the achievements of Justice Sonia Sotomayor, a daughter of the Bronx who also dreamed big and whose success is a great example for the children of the Bronx and New York City.” And by the way, he added, “She’s the world’s biggest Yankee fan.

His sentiment was echoed by Congressman Serrano. “Justice Sonia Sotomayor is the best of the Bronx, and we are proud to welcome her in this ‘homecoming event,’” he said, “She is perhaps the best example of where hard work and determination can get you. When she was a kid, she looked out those same project windows as I did and kids today do, and through her incredible tenacity and perseverance, she now looks out the window of her Supreme Court office.”

Borough President Diaz praised the museum’s efforts from the theater’s stage, “Today, we acknowledge two dreams, one realized and the other well on its way. Last August, history was made when the Bronx’s very own Sonia Sotomayor was confirmed to the United States Supreme Court. On that day children from all over the Bronx had more pep in their step. They were shown that they too could rise from any challenge to reach the highest pinnacles of success. That is why we must work to give Bronx children what the children of the other boroughs currently enjoy, a museum where they can begin their life-long journey of the pursuit of knowledge. My office has allocated \$3 million to this wonderful project, and I call upon all of my colleagues in government—both on the local and federal level— to join me and support the creation of this museum for our Bronx children and make this dream a reality for them.

“Dream Big is a guiding principle of the Bronx Children’s Museum,” said board president Hope Harley, “Every child should have big dreams and know that their dreams can come true. The goal of the museum is to nurture and inspire the love of learning and to give children and their families the opportunity to discover new things about themselves and the world around them.”

Founding Executive Carla Precht added, “Our Museum will continue to provide programs in the community under the umbrella of “Dreaming Big” for at least three more years while our home is being built and we’re thrilled to have a new art bus for traveling exhibits”

The Bronx Children’s Museum is slated to open its doors at its permanent location at 733 Exterior Street by 2013. This is in Mill Pond Park in the South Bronx, adjacent to the Major Deegan Expressway and the new Gateway Mall, and within walking distance to the new Yankee Stadium, Metro-North Station, and the subway system.

The museum will provide interactive query-based programs both inside and outside the Museum’s walls that promote literacy, the arts, science, cultural enrichment, greening, and sustainability. Its new art bus will transport and operate traveling exhibits. The Museum will collaborate with, complement and support community-based organizations, shelters, foster care and day care programs, and schools, as well as cultural and recreational institutions in the Bronx.