The Baychester Community Center was officially inaugurated on January 14, 2003 as New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Chairman Tino Hernandez cut the ribbon at the entrance to a new building that promises to endure as a landmark of the Bronx, indeed of New York. It is a structure of noble simplicity, which also houses the Bay-Eden Senior Center, and which came into being as a result of the persistence of NYCHA’s resident leadership and the collaborative financing of NYCHA, the New York City Council and the Department for the Aging.

Joining Mr. Hernandez were former City Council Member Lawrence Warden, who represented Bronx District 12, including Baychester, and who was instrumental in the appropriation of over $2 million in City Council funds for the project; and current City Council Member for the district, Larry Seabrook. The overall cost of the new 15,500-square-foot facility was $9.6 million.

Designed in its entirety by the Housing Authority’s Department of Design and Capital Improvement, the brick and glass structure is appropriately down-to-earth and well suited to its site on West 239th Street and Schieffelin Avenue; but on the inside it is airy — with sky views capping walls and sunlight pouring in through a canopy of translucent fiberglass above the new gymnasium.

Leading off the dedication program, Baychester Resident Association President Ernestine Russell told the pre-luncheon gathering, “This is the most beautiful thing we have in this community, and we want to keep it that way.”

Much of that beauty began in the imagination of architect Dele Arowolo, who has been with the NYCHA Design Department for 13 years. Mr. Arowolo wanted to make it “a quiet gymnasium,” and so surrounded the enormous space with acoustical panels. The design team headed by Department Director David Burney and Deputy Director Efithia Tsihiridis, worked for a year before the project was ready to be turned over to NYCHA’s Construction Department and Director Robert Yauch.

“The month after month, I’ve driven by, watching this building...”
Building The Next New York

T he diverse communities that make this the world’s second home have demonstrated once again that New Yorkers always come together in times of crisis. They’ve shown the world the true fighting spirit of a united people. And let us not forget that the 425,000 New Yorkers who live in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments are a microcosm of our great City, reflecting the same diversity and strength.

The first responsibility of city government is public safety. Every year, as the crime rate climbed nationally, the NYPD has brought down crime to the lowest levels in 40 years, despite a smaller force and a recession. Likewise, overall crime in New York City Housing Authority developments has also gone down. We ended 2002 holding the undisputed title as the safest big city in the nation, with the lowest crime rate since the early 1980s. The number of New Yorkers receiving public assistance also continued to decline last year. It now stands at some 420,000 people, down from 1.1 million in 1996. That’s a tribute to our City’s commitment to replacing the dependency of welfare with the dignity of work. And infant mortality — a bellwether of public health and our success in ending the worst effects of poverty — fell to its lowest recorded rate in history.

We also achieved accountability in running our public schools. This is the crucial first step in giving all of our 1.1 million school children the education they need and deserve. In the coming year, Schools Chancellor Joel L. Klein and his team at the Department of Education will focus on a new accountable administrative structure, instituting a standardized curriculum for more than 80% of our schools and making the school system “parent friendly.”

We are building on a year of remarkable progress. Today the employment picture has stabilized in crucial sectors of our economy. And during 2002, the crime rate climbed nationally, but they were the right ones. To date, we’ve reduced the cost to New York City of over $3 billion housing initiative that leverages the assets of the Housing Development Corporation to build 65,000 units of new and renovated housing. This will address one of the City’s biggest problems: lack of affordable housing. It will also create nearly 67,000 full time construction and construction-related jobs. The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and NYCHA are key partners in this initiative.

Recognizing our accomplishments we cannot ignore our remaining challenges. They are formidable and they will require duty, discipline and sacrifice. The problem of balancing the City’s budget remains our toughest immediate challenge. Over the last year we’ve made choices that weren’t easy ones but we were the right ones. To date, we’ve reduced the cost to the public of City services by over $2.5 billion and by most measures, we’re providing better, not worse services to our citizens. We’ll spend less and simultaneously keep the streets safe and clean, educate our kids, house our citizens and help those who need our assistance to participate in the American dream.

New Yorkers have a long history of overcoming setbacks, and in the wake of each have created a more prosperous, more just, more humane city. Our sense of shared purpose and our willingness to do whatever it takes, our resourcefulness and refusal to give up has pulled us through. Animated by that spirit and guided by our love of this City, let us continue to build the next New York.

Michael R. Bloomberg

Octavitas Celebration At Campos Plaza

Guest Stars Plena Libre, Direct From Puerto Rico

O n a bitterly cold January 10, 2003, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents and staff gathered together at the Pedro Albizu Campos Community Center in Manhattan’s East Village to pay tribute to Puerto Rican heritage with a traditional Octavitas Celebration. There was food, dancing and most importantly — music — thanks to the international plena pop sensation, Plena Libre.

Octavitas, which originated in Puerto Rico in 1873, lasts for eight days beginning after Three Kings Day and ending with Lent. Originally the holiday was an extension of Three Kings Day, a time to continue to glorify the kings and Christ. The last day of Octavitas is considered the official end of the Christmas celebration.

The celebration at Campos began with Plena Libre’s bassist and founder, Gary Nuñez, conducting a special Bomba y Plena Educational Workshop with 200 children from Campos and the nearby Jacob Riis, Baruch, Rutgers, Two Bridges and Seward Park Community Centers.

“How many of you know where Puerto Rico is?” Mr. Nuñez asked the children who were seated in a semi-circle in the brightly decorated gymnasium. A few hands shot up in response. After dispensing quickly with the geography, Mr. Nuñez went right to the heart of the matter, saying, “Where Puerto Rico is it is very warm all throughout the year.”

Plena Libre’s popularity has extended far beyond Puerto Rico, where it was founded in 1994. In fact, Plena Libre has been nominated for a Grammy Award this year in the Traditional Tropical Latin Album category, its first English language Grammy nomination. But stardom didn’t stop these modern day troubadours from making a stop at Campos Plaza to help NYCHA celebrate Octavitas.

After a brief history of plena, which along with bomba music is a traditional genre of Puerto Rican music with West African roots, Mr. Nuñez described the various instruments used, including the panderetas, which are hand-held drums, like tambourines, and the congas. Guided by band members, a number of children played the instruments themselves, with a distinctive plena rhythm, while the audience clapped along. At the same time Mr. Nuñez got everyone on their feet to teach them the basic plena y bomba dance step, “left foot out, left foot in, right foot out, right foot in.”

Once the children’s workshop ended, NYCHA residents and staff arrived for the Octavitas Celebration.

“NYCHA Chairman Tino Hernandez and NYCHA staff take pride in honoring the Puerto Rican community with this Octavitas Celebration,” NYCHA Senior Policy Advisor Carmen Ambert announced to the audience at the start of the show. And Community (Continued on page 3)
The Earned Income Tax Credit
It’s Your Money, Come and Get It

I f you earn income from work you may have a significant tax refund coming to you. It is the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and I urge all eligible NYCHA residents to apply for it when filing federal and state tax returns this year. I know, the word “taxes” gives most of us a headache, we don’t want to think about it if we don’t have to; but in this case, it is really worth your while.

As a matter of fact, if you are one of the 31,000 NYCHA families who could qualify for the EITC you should have received a letter about the EITC in the mail. But just in case you missed it, or missed the article in last month’s Journal, I want to strongly recommend that you find out about this refund. As Mayor Bloomberg’s citywide campaign says: “EITC: It’s Your Money, Come and Get It.” Based upon your family size and income, the EITC refund could be as high as several thousand dollars.

The Mayor has gathered the forces of the City Council, the Department of Consumer Affairs and other government agencies, along with corporations and community organizations to spread the word about the EITC, and NYCHA is a full partner in that initiative.

The EITC is available to families earning less than $34,178 a year with more than one child, families earning less than $30,201 annually with one child, and individuals 24 years of age and older making less than $11,060 annually. The amount of credit is determined by the amount of income and family size. The EITC can be worth as much as $5,278 (combined federal and state), and with the average for NYCHA families expected to exceed $2,500. If all NYCHA families who qualify were to file for the EITC, over $50 million would flow into the households of our residents. Be sure to apply for your share.

Whether or not you qualify for the EITC, you may want professional help in preparing your taxes. NYCHA residents can get that help — FREE — at many locations throughout the city — including six NYCHA locations. If you earned under $34,000 last year, you can get free tax filing assistance. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program will work with you to prepare basic income tax returns at no charge at VITA sites. VITA sites are staffed by knowledgeable volunteers trained by the Internal Revenue Service.

I visited one of these sites recently, the Lower East Side People’s Federal Credit Union. Council Member Margarita Lopez, the Credit Union staff and I joined with IRS Manager Michael J. McCormick to tell the people of that community two things — file for the EITC and get free help with your taxes.

To find the location nearest to you, or for free federal income tax information, call the Internal Revenue Service toll-free at (800) 829-1040. For a copy of the free IRS Publication 596 about the Earned Income Credit Tax, call 1-800-829-3676 or log onto www.irs.gov. To get information about New York State and local income taxes, contact the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance at (800) CALL-TAX or (800) 225-5829. To find out more about the EITC you can also call the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs’ automated hotline at (212) 487-4444 or log onto www.nyc.gov/consumers.

One more thing. The EITC does not count as income in determining your rent, it will not affect other government benefits such as public assistance, nor is it counted as income in calculating entitlement to Medicaid, Food Stamps, and SSI. However, the payment must be spent by the end of the month following the month it is received in order to retain eligibility for these government benefits.

And don’t forget, the tax filing deadline is April 15!
The NYCHA “Not Wanted” List

In this issue we continue our editorial policy of publishing the names of individuals who have been permanently excluded from our public housing developments. Listing the proscribed persons is part of the effort to keep residents informed of NYCHA’s ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers in public housing and to allow for the peaceful and safe use of our facilities. Here follows a list of the people excluded after hearings were held on July 18 and 25, August 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29, September 5, 12, 19 and 26, and October 17, 24 and 31, 2001. REMEMBER, IF YOU SEE ANY OF THESE PERSONS ON HOUSING AUTHORITY PROPERTY, PLEASE CALL YOUR MANAGEMENT OFFICE OR THE POLICE! THIS LIST IS PROVIDED TO ALL POLICE SERVICE AREAS.

Prohibited as of July 18, 2001

Darnell Ravenelle Case 2622/01 formerly associated with the ninth floor of 1440 Bronx River Avenue, Bronx River Houses, the Bronx.

Allen McGraw Case 2623/01 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 1451 Washington Avenue, Morris Houses, the Bronx.

Radford Prince Jr. Case 2656/01 formerly associated with the third floor of 71 Wayne Terrace, West Brighton Houses, Staten Island.

Prohibited as of July 25, 2001

Charles Williams Case 5219/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 2821 Dewey Avenue, Throgs Neck Houses, the Bronx.

Derrek Hanna Case 2733/01 formerly associated with the third floor of 531 East 143rd Street, Patterson Houses, the Bronx.

Prohibited as of August 1, 2001

Leonard Williams Case 2757/01 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 2326 West 8th Street, Marlboro Houses, Brooklyn.

Richard Cruz Case 2790/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 2715 Third Avenue, Patterson Houses, the Bronx.

Jimmy Mejias Case 2758/01 formerly associated with the thirteenth floor of 300 Cherry Street, La Guardia Houses, Manhattan.

Prohibited as of August 8, 2001

 Kareem Lewin Case 2819/01 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 281 East 151st Street, Melrose Houses, the Bronx.

Frederick Wright Case 2823/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 325 East 143rd Street, Patterson Houses, the Bronx.

Walter Potter Case 2853/01 formerly associated with the third floor of 109-84 160th Street, South Jamaica Houses, Jamaica, New York.

Efrain Vazquez Case 2854/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 225-227 Willis Avenue, Mitchell Houses, the Bronx.

Victor Maldonado Case 2850/01 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 310 East 102nd Street, Metro North Plaza Houses, Manhattan.

Prohibited as of August 15, 2001

Charles Gregory Case 2960/01 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 56-16 Beach Channel Drive, Ocean Bay Apartments (formerly Arverne/Edgemere Houses), Far Rockaway.

Kerri Fleming Case 2973/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 131 Jersey Street, Richmond Terrace, Staten Island.

Terrance Brown Case 793/01 formerly associated with the thirteenth floor of 21 West 112th Street, King Towers, Manhattan.

David Hall Case 2903/01 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 452 East 105th Street, East River Houses, Manhattan.

(Continued on page 5)
PHAS INSPECTION RULES MAY CHANGE
HUD To Hold Public Hearing

As part of the Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is required by federal law to conduct yearly inspections of New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments. This is the fifth year of these inspections. The physical inspections are based on a 30 point scale. For fiscal year 2001 (the last inspection performed) NYCHA received a score of 23 for the physical inspection, an improvement of seven points over the initial physical inspection score for fiscal year 1998 of 16 points.

These inspections review conditions of building systems, common areas, grounds and apartment interiors. Special attention is paid to maintenance safety violations which must be corrected within 24 hours.

Proposed Rule Changes
This year, for the first time HUD is requiring that NYCHA give the inspectors full and free access to any apartment that the inspectors pick, “whether or not the resident is home or has installed additional locks for which the public housing authority does not possess keys.” Changes in the PHAS rules are being proposed that would result in (1) much less flexibility in the selection of apartments to be inspected, and (2) compulsory entry into apartments whether or not residents are home or keys are available. The proposed HUD rule will also require that the development be given “0” points if access to apartments is not given to the inspectors. Poor PHAS scores result in serious consequences, such as the denial of certain federal funds.

Inspections Begin On February 24, 2003
The first PHAS inspections for 2003 will take place from February 24 – 27 at five NYCHA developments: Eastchester, O’Dwyer, Queensbridge, LaGuardia and South Beach. As a part of the new inspection process, if you are to receive an inspection you will be contacted 72 hours in advance of the scheduled inspection. You will be given the option of having the inspection performed in the morning or afternoon. You or a responsible adult must be home to admit the inspectors, or leave keys in the management office. Your lease requires that you provide access to NYCHA when requested. If you fail to provide access on the specified day, NYCHA will be required to immediately commence a tenancy action for a willful violation of your lease.

Selected apartments in all developments are determined to be inspected. Residents are encouraged to attend. Check subsequent editions of the NYCHA Journal for further information.

ANNUAL PLAN PROCESS BEGINS
The New York City Housing Authority’s (NYCHA’s) 54-member Resident Advisory Board (RAB) held its first meeting at Central Office on the evening of January 15, 2003. The RAB is the team of residents who work with NYCHA to create NYCHA’s Annual Plan, which is submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Over the next few months, special RAB committees will discuss topics ranging from social services to pets, to community service, to crime and safety. The outcome of these discussions will form the basis for the draft Fiscal Year 2004 Annual Plan. Remarks made at Town Hall meetings in each borough, scheduled to begin in June, as well as at a Public Hearing in July, will yield the final Plan to be submitted to HUD on October 17, 2003. Keep an eye out for the dates and locations of the Town Hall meetings and the Public Hearing in your Management Office and Community Center, as well as in your monthly Journal.

Visit NYCHA’s Web site at: www.nyc.gov/nycha

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Call the Dog Hotline:
1 (888) 895-3647

PROHIBITED AS OF

Prohibited as of August 22, 2001
Alfred Horsford Case 3060/01 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 281 East 153rd Street, Melrose Houses, the Bronx.
Efrain Arroyo Case 3072/01 formerly associated with the thirteenth floor of 325 East 143rd Street, Patterson Houses, the Bronx.

Prohibited as of August 29, 2001
Maurice Jackson Case 3110/01 formerly associated with the eleventh floor of 159-38 Harlem River Drive, Ralph Rangel Houses, Manhattan.
Arthur Rutledge, Jr. Case 2048/01 formerly associated with the third floor of 1761 First Avenue, Washington Houses, Manhattan.
Marvin Khan Case 3113/01 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 426 West 27th Drive, Elliott Chelsea Houses, Manhattan.

Prohibited as of September 5, 2001
Rahsan Jackson Case 3204/01 formerly associated with the fifth floor of 41-07 Vernon Blvd., Queens bridge South Houses, Queens.
Bryan Molina Case 3207/01 formerly associated with the fourth floor of 115 East 122nd Street, Jackie Robinson Houses, Manhattan.
Julio Suero Case 3208/01 formerly associated with the seventh floor of 125 West 228th Street, Marble Hill Houses, the Bronx.

Prohibited as of September 12, 2001
Rene Delgado Case 3272/01 formerly associated with the eighth floor of 70 Baruch Drive, Baruch Houses, Manhattan.
Jamal Matthews Case 1882/01 formerly associated with the seventh floor of 40 Amsterdam Avenue, Amsterdam Houses, Manhattan.
Andrew Matthews Dupree Walker Case 3347/01 formerly associated with the third floor of 845 Gates Avenue, Stuyvesant Gardens, Brooklyn.

Prohibited as of September 19, 2001
Linden Samuel Case 3284/01 formerly associated with the seventh floor of 3125 Park Avenue, Morrisania Air Rights Houses, the Bronx.
Norman Sanchez Case 3384/01 formerly associated with the twenty-sixth floor of 3125 Park Avenue, Morrisania Air Rights Houses, the Bronx.
Danny Delgado Case 3386/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 1711 Randall Avenue, Soundview Houses, the Bronx.

Michael Hamilton Case 3389/01 formerly associated with the fifteenth floor of 875 Columbus Avenue, Frederick Douglass Houses, Manhattan.
Bobby Hopson Case 3392/01 formerly associated with the sixth floor of 254 Ralph Avenue, Howard Houses, Brooklyn.

Prohibited as of September 26, 2001
Jovan Jenkins Case 3521/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 197 Gordon Street, Stapleton Houses, Staten Island.

Prohibited as of October 17, 2001
Quaton McKenzie Case 3524/01 formerly associated with the first floor of 435 Gates Avenue, Louis Armstrong Houses, Brooklyn.

Prohibited as of October 24, 2001
Robert Ragsdale Case 3552/01 formerly associated with the twelfth floor of 1695 Madison Avenue, Taft Houses, Manhattan.
Clayton Mills Case 3567/01 formerly associated with the second floor of 215-217 Alexander Avenue, Mitchell Houses, the Bronx.

Prohibited as of October 31, 2001
Israel Mercado Case 3579/01 formerly associated with the twelfth floor of 54-64 Rutgers Street, Rutgers Houses, Manhattan.
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Celebration At Van Dyke

Young Isis McIntosh explains what Kwanzaa is and is not to the youth and adults at Van Dyke Houses Community Center.

It was a celebration of family, community and culture — and a time to get presents! More than 300 children and teens from seven New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) community centers in Brooklyn filled the gymnasium at the Van Dyke Community Center on December 18, 2002 to ring in the holidays with the borough’s First Annual Christmas/Kwanzaa Celebration. Using dance, drama or song, the groups showcased their talents which were cultivated with the help of Community Operations’ Performing Arts Consultants.

Brooklyn Senior Program Manager Lisa Davis and Citywide Performing Arts Coordinator Keir Nelson kept the tone lively as Masters of Ceremony for the event, which focused on Kwanzaa while taking into account other seasonal holidays such as Christmas and Channukah. “This is an event for children, by children,” Ms. Davis said by way of introduction. She emphasized that unity was the prevailing theme of the evening and that many people from different boroughs helped make the occasion possible.

“Kwanzaa is neither a political nor a religious holiday,” explained young Isis McIntosh from Van Dyke Houses, “nor is it a substitute for Christmas. It is simply a time for African-American people to gather together and celebrate their culture and heritage.” Kwanzaa takes place over seven days, beginning on December 26 and ending on January 1, with each day representing one of seven principles. The principles — unity, self-determination, cooperative economics, creativity, collective work and responsibility, purpose and faith — were elaborated on between performances.

The evening included many dance numbers, skits, a karate performance and even a horror film parody, à la “The Blair Witch Project” that was written and videotaped by young residents from Williamsburg, with the help of the Students Urban Video Program. In addition to Van Dyke residents, residents from Bayview, Boulevard, Sheepshead/Nostroand, Weeksville, Stuyvesant and Tilden Houses participated. The Black National Anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” opened and closed the program.

Special thanks to the many generous sponsors who made contributions, including Verizon, Con Edison, Moshood Inc., Bob Mann Tours, the Department of Education, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Brooklyn Kiwanis Club, the Stuyvesant Tenant Association, the Tilden Houses Advisory Board, the Boulevard Houses Advisory Board, the Weeksville Houses Tenant Association, and the Queens Audio Engineer Youth Program. Thanks also to Garden Program Coordinator Howard Hemmings who donated the Christmas tree, Brooklyn Borough Community Coordinator Sarah Lee McWhite and Bayview Community Coordinator Karl Porter.

The program opened with a procession in honor of one of NYCHA’s elder stateswoman, Mrs. Ruby Kitchen, President of the Martin Luther King Towers Resident Council, prime mover of this celebration and events throughout the year. For this commemoration Mrs. Kitchen fashioned a program that she described as an expression of “the world we live in,” with a succession of speakers and entertainment designed mainly to sustain the interest of the children. “The children most all need to hear. Martin Luther King should be as real to them as he is to those of us who lived in his time.”

Councilman William Perkins, Deputy Majority Leader of the New York City Council, saved his address for last, giving the greater part of the program to the Reverend Juanita Pierre-Louis, Mistress of Ceremonies, and presentations spiritual, poetic and dramatic. Dances choreographed by Aisha Hawkins to the drums of Abdul Hawkins, playlets written by Talesha Woods and performed by the “King Kids,” and history brought to life by Community Assistant Shayvonne Mitchell mingled with Nubla Garcia’s reflections on Scripture and speeches from NYCHA Vice-Chairman Earl Andrews, Jr. and General Manager Douglas Apple.

The Reverend Anthony Mann of the Baptist Temple Church provided the invocation for the capacity-plus attendance of over 150, who were also addressed by NYCHA’s Manhattan Borough Management Director Carolyn Jasper, Community Operations Senior Director Michelle-Pinnock Clerk and Community Operations Director Luis Soler. Professor Preston Wilcox, longtime Harlem activist, historian and a legend in the community, shared his personal recollections of Dr. King, who was a fellow alumnus of Morehouse College in Atlanta.

Community leaders Elombe and Nomsa Braith made special mention of the dedicated work by Councilman Perkins. District leaders Keith Lilly and Pamela Green-Perkins also contributed to the dynamic afternoon. Mrs. Green-Perkins’ bond to Martin Luther King Towers is not only as District Leader or as the wife of the Councilman, but as a former resident, having grown up in the development. Management Director Paul Lavelle and Superintendant Mathew Jordan were also in attendance, as was Assistant Community Center Director Michael Brown, all of whom were instrumental to the success of the event.

FREE evening career enhancement training for working residents The Wildcat Service Corporation, in partnership with NYCHA, is offering training Monday through Thursday from 6:00 - 9:00 PM at its lower Manhattan location. Current or Former TANF, SSI, Food Stamps Recipients Encouraged to Enroll. Enrollment is ongoing.

SPEAK OUT AGAINST FRAUD AND CORRUPTION!
If you or anyone in your family is aware of any fraud or corruption committed against the New York City Housing Authority (“NYCHA”) by any NYCHA employee, contractor, vendor, or resident, we urge you to call the NYCHA Inspector General (“IG”) at 212-306-3355 or the Department of Investigation (“DOI”) at 212-3-NYC-DOI or 212-825-5959. The IG and DOI rely on NYCHA employees, residents and people who do business with NYCHA, and the public at large to report fraudulent and corrupt activity they see or hear.

By Allan Leicht
Operations’ Willie Nieves followed her remarks by saying, “It is wonderful to see a beautiful tradition continue — especially for the children.”

Department of Community Operations Deputy General Manager Hugh B. Spence expressed his gratitude, in English and Spanish, for the opportunity to celebrate Octavitas, and NYCHA Chairman Tino Hernandez congratulated Plena Libre on its Grammy nomination. He also thanked the band members for their “terrific work” with the children.

With that, Mr. Nuñez and his troubadours began pounding their panderetas, as they made their way through the crowd to center stage.

“Music is an important part of our soul,” said Mr. Nuñez earlier in the evening. “Plena is the rhythm of Puerto Rico. We take this rhythm from Puerto Rico to the world.” To the delight of NYCHA and its residents, on the evening of January 10, Plena Libre focused on just one small corner of the world — Campos Plaza.
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