

July 31-August 6, 2008

## NDI celebrates Mexico in Manhattan

More than 100 National Dance Institute (NDI) public school children from Mott Hall/IS 223 on the Upper West Side presented a high-spirited performance called "Celebrating Mexico." Mott Hall serves gifted District 6 students in fourth through eighth grade who are some of NDI's strongest dancers and are quick and eager to learn. Founded by Jacques d'Amboise, NDI provides a comprehensive 32-week in-school program impacting 25,000 children. "Celebrating Mexico" is the culmination of the dancers' year-long study of the richness of Mexican history, culture and art realized in dance and music.

At each of its 30 partner schools in New York City and Jersey City, NDI enrolls entire grades of children, making dance an integral part of the school curriculum—as important as literacy or math. "Celebrating Mexico" was inspired by a collaboration between NDI and ConArte, a Mexico City-based arts education organization. For the past two years, NDI has been working closely with ConArte, sharing its unique, award-winning pedagogy and building a cultural exchange between the teachers and students of Mexico City and New York City. NDI programs use the pathways of the arts to help children learn about their world and discover their own inherent excellence.

At the performance, Mott Hall/IS 223 hosted board member Helen Stambler-Neuberger and a group of 11 young dancers from the ConArte program in Mexico City, along with four teachers from the ConArte partner schools and a ConArte teaching artist. Stambler-Neuberger, who traveled with a delegation of NDI teaching



School children from Mott Hall/IS 223 on the Upper West Side perform in the National Dance Institute's "Celebrating Mexico"

(Lizvette De La Cruz photo)

artists and staff to Mexico City in February 2008, worked with renowned Mexican artists Marissa Lara and Arturo Guerrero on a banner project with children from ConArte's NDI-inspired program Aprender con Danza (Learning through Dance). The Mexico Banner Project was on display as the backdrop for Mott Hall's performance.

National Dance Institute is a not-for-profit organization founded with the belief that the arts have a unique power to engage children and motivate them toward excellence. Children gain the self-confidence and satisfaction that come from real achievement, developing personal standards of excellence, a deep love of the arts, and the motivation to succeed in all aspects of their lives. Over 2 million children have participated in NDI programs. NDI was founded in 1976 by New York City Ballet principal dancer Jacques d'Amboise, and since 1995 has been under the artistic leadership of Ellen Weinstein. For more information, please log on to [www.nationaldance.org](http://www.nationaldance.org).