

## Jax. Heights pedestrian plaza greets May with arts and music



Photo by Bill Parry

A month-long cultural program gets underway in Jackson Heights on Friday. Photo by Bill Parry

**By Bill Parry**

A full month of entertainment, classes and services is planned for the Manuel de Dios Unanue Triangle on Roosevelt Avenue in Jackson Heights, and it is designed for families and people of all ages.

The new Jackson Heights-Corona Business Improvement District, the proposed expansion of the 82nd Street Partnership, is promoting a month-long program at one of the three Pedestrian Plazas in the neighborhood.

The schedule of special events, a celebration of spring called Viva La Primavera, will take place every Thursday and Friday throughout May, it was announced Monday.

Events include Jay Rodriguez Musical Trip Through Jackson Heights this Friday from noon until 3 p.m., followed by a Park Beautification Day Saturday at noon.

In the coming weeks, Viva La Primavera will feature traditional Mexican musical performances, book readings, arts and crafts and even a few Zumba classes and Tae Kwon Do demonstrations.

On May 29, the Urzua Queens Center of Performing Arts will present a Samba Trip to the World Cup as a preliminary for next month's soccer extravaganza in Rio de Janeiro.

"Viva La Primavera is the perfect way to celebrate springtime on Roosevelt Avenue," City Councilwoman Julissa Ferreras (D-East Elmhurst) said. "I encourage everyone to come out and enjoy the entertainment and educational workshops at Manuel de Dios Unanue Triangle."

The plaza, on the south side of Roosevelt Avenue between 83rd Street and Baxter Avenue, was named for a Cuban-born journalist who was slain in 1992 because of his outspoken crusade against drugs.

"This is an exciting new event for the community," Ernesto Curry, the chairman of the BID's steering committee, said. "Our team has partnered with some great local businesses to provide a fun springtime series that celebrates our diverse neighborhood."

Ruben Dario Ramirez, the owner of Libreria El Dorado, at 84-02 Roosevelt Ave., said, “My father and I have owned this bookstore near Manuel de Dios Unanue Triangle for years. We’ve always envisioned the triangle to be a more active space with cultural events, which is why we are so eager to participate in Viva La Primavera this month.”

Luz Aguirre, the program director for Mano a Mano-Mexican Culture Without Borders, said, “We are thrilled to be part of Viva La Primavera. As an organization dedicated to celebrating Mexican culture and promoting the understanding of Mexican traditions through arts and culture, Viva La Primavera is an ideal venue for us to showcase our work and engage community members.”

It is also something of a showcase for the 82nd Street Partnership and what the future can look like with a large BID.

“We think Viva La Primavera will give the businesses a sense of what a neighborhood BID can do,” Seth Taylor, the executive director of the 82nd Street BID said. “We’ll show how we can enliven spaces along the corridor with cultural programs on the plaza.”

*Reach reporter Bill Parry by e-mail at [bparry@cnglocal.com](mailto:bparry@cnglocal.com) or by phone at 718-260-4538.*

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