

# THE STARDUST HOUSE

*Serving the South Ranch II community since 1999*

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A monthly publication

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This summer Phoenix Women's Sports Association and the Phoenix Mercury Hip Hop Squad sponsored The Stardust Hip Hop Dance Project made possible through the W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant. A total of 15 youth ages 10 to 15 years enrolled in the program led by Saza, a member of the Phoenix Mercury Hip Hop Squad and a recent graduate of ASU with a degree in Dance Education and Teaching.

The teens took the program serious and over a short period learned new hip hop dance moves, they quickly picked up how to freestyle, and they learned how to work together to create a dance routine to a medley of various songs. After weeks of learning new moves and practicing their new routine, the group was ready to showcase their dance routine and perform half-time during the regular Phoenix Mercury game of Saturday 24, 2004 at the America West Arena.

"It was amazing experience, I didn't know what to expect, but it turned out so much better than I imagined, explains Saza. "This was the first time I've worked in a community center setting so this was new for me, but the youth all really wanted to be there and they had to work hard and get good grades to be accepted into the program, which I think is great".



*The Stardust Hip Hop Squad gets the public all jazzed up as they perform a routine at half-time during the Phoenix Mercury on Saturday July 24th at the America West Arena.*

Saza smiles when asked what was the benefit of the project, she quickly says, "Watching their growth was the best part, there was a tremendous boost in their self-confidence." Some youth thought they couldn't dance hip hop but they come and they found out they could really do it. "They also grew in the way they worked together, but the end of the eight weeks they were helping each other with the dance formations." Stardust teens shine once again.

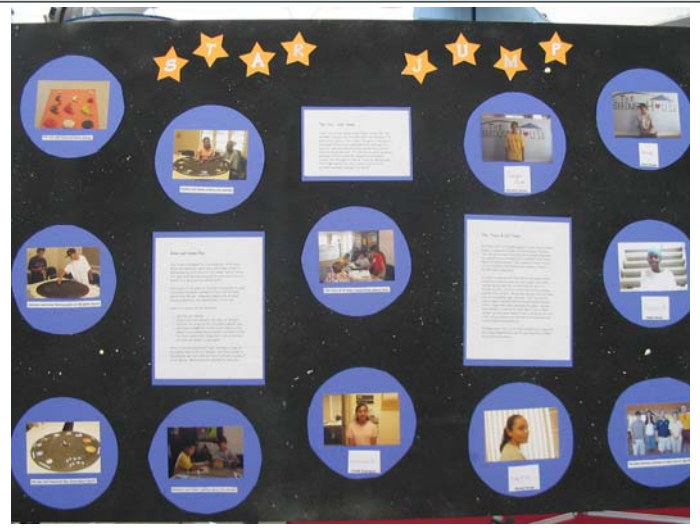


*Stardust Hip Hop Squad members include, front row left-right: Ilse; Kimberly; Karen; & Kristeen. Second row l-r: Clarisa; Jennifer; Beatrice & Swanee. Back row l-r: Candis; Luz; Yaneth; Monalisa; Saza; Abraham & Omar.*

# Youth win “Team Spirit Award”



*Omar Monge and Giovanni Osorio explain how their game “Star Jump” works to the team of judges at the National Toy Challenge Competition in San Diego, California.*



*The group created a display board to explain the objective the game step by step. The game, Star Jump, includes a combination of math and science concepts.*

This March, The Stardust House PAC After-School Program took part in the Toy Challenge at Arizona State University hosted by Sally Ride, the first women astronaut. The youth’s game entitled “Star Jump” was selected as a top educational/fitness game at the competition and was invited to compete in the national competition in San Diego in July.

The team composed of Omar Monge, Wendy Monge, Giovanni Osorio, Yaneth Rodriguez, and Sasha Marsh together created the game with the assistance of students from Arizona State University – Barrett’s Honors College led by Lakshmi Madhavpeddi.

Before the group left on their trip, they had the opportunity to demonstrate their game “Star Jump” during interviews with The Arizona Republic, Fox 10 Television, Univision – Channel 33, and KPNX-TV 12 for Arizona Midday Show.

As a finalist, the group attended the National Competition in San Diego, California on July 8, 2004 to compete against other teams from across the nation. Their hard word, dedication, and sheer enthusiasm was recognized by the team of judges awarding them the “Team Spirit Award!”

For some members of the group, this was the first time some they’d traveled out of the Phoenix Metro area and the first time they stayed in a hotel room. After the competition, the teens had a fun day at the ocean playing in

the sand, getting wet, and some collected seashells on Mission Bay Beach.

In all, it was an incredible learning experience for the youth that took part in the competition; the best part was the boost in their self-esteem.

The Stardust House would like to thank Christy, Al, and Keith Southergill as well as Lakshmi Madhavpeddi from ASU – Barrett Honors College and Jason Gitkin of the City of Phoenix for assisting the youth with the development of the game. They took time from their very busy schedules to coordinate and support our youth on the trip to California. A Sincere THANK YOU !!!!



*Yaneth, Sasha, Wendy, Omar & Giovanni smile while having fun playing around at Mission Bay Beach in San Diego.*



*PAC Summer Day Program staff members Antonio Berumen, Patty Pagluica, and Anthony Flores, arrive at work and ready for another day full of activities. Not pictured is Shaun Sells. A big thank you to all of them for a job well done.*



*Summer Dance Camp members Jennifer Lopez, Swanee Villezcas, Brisa Duran, Kimberly and Kenia Osuna practice playing on the steel drums. The group learned Brazilian dances, made arts & crafts, and learned to play steel drums.*



*Multicultural Arts Camp teens leave with bags full of arts and crafts created during camp. Teens l-r are Brisa Duran, David Rios, Daniel Osuna, Luis Osuna & Jesus Garcia.*



*The second group of students attending the Multicultural Arts Camp are Khadijah, Karen, Kenia, Kimberly, Lupita, Ilse, Berenice, Omar, and Mirosalva sitting in front.*



## **Boxer visits Stardust**

Local boxer Jesus Ernie Gonzales paid a visit to the Stardust Summer Day Program to talk to the youth about his boxing career. Ernie is a '03 graduate of Carl Hayden High School who signed with boxing promoter Bob Arum to fight professional last year. He says his daily physical routine includes running 4-6 miles and four hours in the gym. He emphasized the need for teens to exercise and stay fit. The youth were impressed with his record of 10 wins, 0 losses, and 8 knockouts. After speaking, Ernie signed autographs and spoke with youth one-on-one.

# Head Start Begins New Year



*Head Start Teacher Minerva Salcido-Sanchez helps Etzain Santamaria work at developing his basic fine motor skills as he plays with clay during class.*



*Head Start preschool students have fun playing house and role-playing. Students pictured left-right are: Evelyn; Ashley; Brenda; Lilibeth; and Yesenia.*

The Stardust Head Start classroom has a fresh new look for the 2004-2005 school year. Over the three week summer break, program staff and volunteers were busy cleaning and rearranging the classroom in their effort to make sure everything was ready in time for the start of the new academic year that started on Monday July 26, 2004.

The classroom received a new coat of paint and the walls have come alive with the fresh colors of asparagus green and bumble bee yellow. Angelica Sillas, a parent volunteered along with her teens to paint the classroom, she said "The colors really brighten up the classroom, I like it, they're colors that help kids learn". According to color experts, yellow reenergizes the brain and green is spiritual and helps with healing. In addition to painting, the classroom floors were stripped, cleaned and waxed and the carpets received a thorough cleaning and fresh smell. It took program staff and volunteers just over one full week to move files, furniture, and equipment in order to get things ready for the coming year.

Minerva Salcido-Sanchez is the new lead Head Start Teacher with teacher Lisa Reyes serving as her as-

sistant. Diane Gomez, stationed at Travis Williams Human Resource is the new caseworker for the program.

Minerva says she feels fortunate to have the opportunity to work at Stardust, "I'm so excited to be here, to be working with the families, to be at this site, and am looking forwards to a year of growth and positive outcomes". She adds, "This neighborhood has such a holistic approach to working that I really like." Minerva says she looks forward to working with parents who care about the quality of education of their children, she says, "I want parents to ask questions, to play an active role in the program, and to participate in the parent council. I want to hear what they have to say so that we can improve what we're doing."

The new class of 17 preschool children has at total of 15 students who reside in the South Ranch II neighborhood. The enrollment success is due in large part to the efforts of AmeriCorp member Martina Sandoval who spent time this spring identifying eligible preschool age children in the neighborhood and recruiting them for the program. We wish the parents, students, and staff a great new year.