

The Graces

The Official Newsletter of the Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc.



LATINO HERITAGE MONTH



Mes de la Herencia Hispana September 15 to October 15

COMITÉ NOVIEMBRE
29th Anniversary
mes de la herencia puertorriqueña

For the past 29 years, Comité Noviembre, (CN), has celebrated Puerto Rican Heritage Month in this country. CN is a non-profit organization dedicated to commemorating and acknowledging the contributions Puerto Ricans have made to this city, state and nation. CN is composed of fourteen of the oldest and most prestigious Puerto Rican organizations in the country: ASPIRA of New York, Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños Hunter College/CUNY; El Museo del Barrio, El Puente, Eugenio María de Hostos Community College/CUNY, Institute for the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Elderly, La Casa de la Herencia Cultural Puertorriqueña, Inc., La Fundación Nacional para la Cultura Popular, LatinoJustice: PRLDEF, and Música de Cámara, National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights — Justice Committee, National Institute for Latino Policy, and Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration which serves in an advisory position. This coordinating body plans and promotes CN's annual programs and events.

The charge of CN is to create awareness of our rich culture, language, and heritage and to acknowledge and take ownership of it every day but specifically during the month of November. Because of CN, *November* is our month to discuss all aspects and issues of our community – with respect, objectivity and pride. For almost three decades, CN, has created and developed programs all geared to the support and enhancement of educational opportunities and leadership development for Puerto Rican and Hispanic youth with a cultural twist. These programs are firmly rooted in the belief, that in order to succeed in life, you must pursue a higher education, give back to your community through volunteer efforts and know your cultural roots.

By Gracious Melody Lisa Rodriguez



September/October
2015

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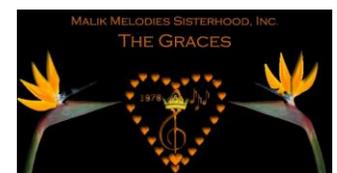
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Congratulations

Gracious Melody Maria Lopez
recipient of the
2015 Comité Noviembre (CN)
“Lo Mejor de Nuestra Comunidad” Award

**Maria will be honored on
Thursday , October 29, 2015
at El Museo del Barrio, 1230 Fifth Avenue, Heckscher Theater, Manhattan
from 6PM – 9:30PM. (FREE Event)**

This is a FREE event and a reception will immediately follow.

Through this award, CN recognizes outstanding individuals who are the unsung heroes of our community. These awards honor Puerto Ricans whose pride in their heritage and strength of character have empowered themselves and inspired others to make a significant impact on our community.

The other Lo Mejor recipients are: Jeannette Bocanegra, Director of Family Engagement, Community Connections for Youth; Aurora Flores, musician/bandleader, ZON del Barrio; Bobby Gonzalez, Multicultural Lecturer, Storyteller, Poet; Jesús “Papoletto” Melendez, Founder, Artspace 109; Melissa Montero Padilla, Co-coordinator, Mujeres X Oscar, NYC; Deborah Quiñones, Founder, International Coquito Federation, and Hector Ramos, retired, advocate and volunteer.

National Hispanic Heritage Month celebrates Latinos and their culture and history. Started as Hispanic Heritage Week in 1968 by President Lyndon Johnson, it was expanded to a month by President Ronald Reagan and enacted into law in 1988.

Did you know...?

- Sept. 15 was chosen as the starting point for the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month because it is the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on Sept. 16 and Sept. 18.
- Seventy percent of the Hispanic population lives in five states: California, Texas, New York, Florida and Illinois
- There are 1.1 million Hispanic veterans of the U.S. armed forces.

Source <http://www.gru.edu/diversity/hhm/facts.php>

Melodies on the Move



Gracious Melody Maria Lopez

Gracious Melody **Maria Lopez** was born in Brooklyn in September of 1963. Her mother decided to move temporarily to Puerto Rico for the birth of Maria's brother, Carmelo that following year. Her mother was concerned about Carmelo, after being told he would be born with heart disease. A few years later, Carmelo began to have fainting spells. The doctors in Puerto Rico arranged to have Maria's mom and brother flown to New York. Maria's mom was told that Carmelo would need open heart surgery to repair his heart. After speaking with a social worker about Maria's brother, her mother began to discuss Maria's fainting spells. Maria was then flown to New York as well where doctors detected that Maria also had a congenital heart disease. They felt Maria's condition was worse; she was diagnosed with *Tetralogy of Fallot*.



Maria with Dr. Spencer who did her first open heart surgery in 1969.

Tetralogy of Fallot is a heart disease, which is understood to involve four anatomical abnormalities of the heart. TOF children develop "tet spells" which are episodes that results from a transient increase in resistance to blood flow to the lungs and an increase flow of desaturated blood to the body causing an increase in cyanosis "*Blue Baby Syndrome*" and may have resulted in hypoxic brain injury and death.

In May of 1969, at the young age of five, Maria had her first open heart surgery at NYU to correct the defects and her brother had his heart surgery in November of that same year. Since then, Maria has continued living a normal life with minimal restrictions.

Maria went on to college to pursue her dream of working with children. She attended Hofstra University and was on the founding Scale of the Malik Melodies TAA Chapter Spring 1983. After graduating from Hofstra, she continued to pursue her Master's degree from Long Island University in Guidance Counseling. Maria worked in a community based organization providing counseling to children who had issues with attendance. She was fortunate enough to give birth to a healthy son, Steve despite a high risk pregnancy because of her heart condition. Steve, now a young man, has established his residence in Florida where he is pursuing his education.



Maria went on to work as a counselor and later advanced to become the Program Director of the PINS program (Person in Need of Supervision), a court supervised program for juvenile who may be having issues with their parents, schools and even the law. At that point in her life, she felt compelled to pursue a second Master's degree in Social Work Administration and Clinical



Counseling. Maria went on to become a Program Director and later a Community School Director supervising, creating and developing various children and adult programs including healthy cooking, gardening, community service, and adult learning, to name a few.

About two years ago, Maria began to feel out of breath and experience tremendous fatigue. Her health continued to decline and she felt something was just not right. After speaking with her cardiologist, she was told she needed a second open-heart surgery for a pulmonary valve replacement. It took a few months to recuperate and she was able to bounce back; however, Maria learned that she was experiencing heart failure and is now on medication to continue to stabilize her health.



A dedicated and proud member of the Malik Melodies, Maria made the difficult decision to withdraw from her position as President of the Professional Branch of the Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc. to focus on her health and her well-being. She was wholeheartedly supported by the Melodies who acknowledged that her priority should be her health.

Maria then pursued a different type of work, MLTC or Managed Long Term Care Program. For the next two years, she supervised registered nurses and social workers and she began to understand the medical aspect of an MLTC. This growing interest opened up a new world and a passion for working with members. She decided to pursue a social work position at a different agency, Senior Whole Health, where she is working presently. This position has allowed her to help members plan their care in order to continue living in the community or to make other decisions as they learn about their health conditions. She is now interested in palliative care to help members address their end of life care.



Maria has also created her own Pay it Forward campaign. She found a passion in loom knitting and decided to make character hats to donate to babies born with TOF and other heart diseases. Her goal is to reach 1969 hats, symbolizing the year she had her first open heart surgery. So far, she has sent hats all over United States, Canada, Australia and England. Maria has shared the photo and stories of these precious babies on her Instagram @Precioushearts1969_payforward.



Gracious Melody Maria Lopez is an inspiration to all of us for her strength, endurance, and commitment in the face of adversity. Maria turned a health challenge into a positive crusade to help others in crisis. In the true spirit of Melody, this woman has courage! We affectionately dubbed her the **Queen of Hearts**... a special title of endearment that symbolizes our love for her, the respect we have for her struggle, and her compassion and dedication to help babies with heart conditions.






MALIK FRATERNITY, INC.
NYC SHABAZZ GRADUATE KINGDOM

**NATIONAL LATINO
HERITAGE MONTH
CELEBRATION**

"THE AFRO-LATINO, MANY FACES ONE PEOPLE"
\$30 DONATION

TICKETS AT: MALIKLATINOMONTH.EVENTBRITE.COM
INQUIRIES: INFO@MALIKFRATERNITY.ORG
VISIT US AT: WWW.MALIKFRATERNITY.ORG

| AMERICAN NEGRO THEATER | SCHOMBURG CENTER |
515 MALCOLM X BLVD, NEW YORK, NY

SATURDAY OCTOBER 3RD

LUNCHEON 12PM - 4PM
FINE LATIN CUISINE, ART, POETRY & MUSIC
HONORED GUEST FELIPE LUCIANO



MALIK Fraternity National Latino Heritage Month Celebration

It was standing room only on Saturday, October 3, 2015 when MALIK Fraternity, Inc. celebrated National Latino Heritage Month with a great program at the American Negro Theater of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. The event's theme was "The Afro-Latino connection, a bond from birth." Felipe Luciano gave a spirited keynote address that engaged the audience. Felipe Luciano is an Afro-Latino community activist, journalist, member of the Last Poets and former member of the "Young Lords Party". The event featured a buffet/cocktail luncheon of Latin cuisine, Latin music, salsa instructions, art display and guided tour of the Schomburg. Excerpts from the documentary, Black in Latin America by black scholar Dr. Louis Gates as well as a panel discussion rounded out this wonderful inaugural event.

Tickets & donations went to sponsor high schoolers from MALIK Brother Tabari's "Nelson Mandela School"

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture located in Harlem, New York, is a research unit of The New York Public Library system. The Center consists of three connected buildings: The Schomburg Building, the Langston Hughes Building, and the Landmark Building. It is recognized as one of the leading institutions focusing exclusively on African-American, African Diaspora, and African experiences.

515 Malcolm X Boulevard
New York, NY, 10037
(917) 275-6975
<http://www.nypl.org/about/locations/schomburg>



KUDOS



"It was such a rewarding experience to meet Felipe Luciano, founder of the Young Lords Party in New York City. He was the 1st Puerto Rican news anchor on a major network (WNBC) and a member of the Original Last Poets. His presentation was enlightening regarding the African Latino connection. I have to paraphrase a part of his speech – " We need to stop looking at others for relevance, we each have this within ourselves to be great". GM Sharon Harleston

"I'm glad to hear that our MALIK Brothers plan to make the National Latino Heritage Month an annual event. The selection of the venue, the wonderful display of art work by our MALIK Brothers, the excellent cuisine and salsa dancing kept us entertained. The film excerpts from 'Black in Latin America' and the passionate keynote speech by Felipe Luciano, helped enlighten and raise awareness about our shared African and Latino history & cultures. It was also great seeing the young people in attendance who will pass on our tradition of cultural awareness. I look forward to next year!" GM Lori Dee Frazier

"I am so proud to be a part of our MALIK Brothers' inaugural events! They outdid themselves selecting a perfect venue and crafting a thought-provoking and informative day! It was wonderful to see so many MALIKs and Melodies in attendance as well as young men of Chionesu Bakari and may others. Our lives are busy, but it is important that we remember LA FAMILIA, something that Felipe Luciano made abundantly clear in his fiery keynote. Congratulations my Brothers! Well done!" GM Nathalie C. Lilavois, Ed.D.



Meet Hunter Luis & Lilyana London Suarez !

Hunter
19 inches
5 lbs 7 oz
2:36 am

Born August 20, 2015

CONGRATULATIONS!
SHERLYN, OSCAR, AND ISAIAH

Lilyana
18 inches
4 lbs 12 oz
2:37am

~ EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT ~



Dear Sisters,
Please join us along with your family and friends as a donor and/or walker for the **“Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk”**. We suggest a minimum donation of \$5.00 per person.

Remember all donations are tax deductible. If all of my Facebook friends donated \$5.00 each I could raise over \$4,000!!

Remember to do your **self breast exams monthly** and schedule your mammograms annually. My very first mammogram was abnormal and revealed a cluster of cancer cells.

~**Sis Anita Wallace**

HOSTED BY
“MALIK MELODIES SISTERHOOD, INC.” & “TEAM DIMPLES”
“Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk”

Sunday, October 18th, 2015

8:45am - 12:00pm

JONES BEACH / Field 5

1 Ocean Parkway, Wantagh, NY 11793

Join “TEAM DIMPLES”

To **DONATE** or **WALK** — Click this link:

http://main.acsevents.org/site/TR?px=12444800&pg=personal&fr_id=69992

FOR MORE INFO — email MalikMelodiesPB@gmail.com

DID YOU KNOW THAT MAKING STRIDES IS A NATIONAL INITIATIVE?

FOR MAKING STRIDES events in YOUR STATE — please click this link:

http://makingstrides.acsevents.org/site/PageServer?pagename=MSABC_CY15_National_StateEventListing

We thank you in advance for your support!

GM, Anita Wallace -aka- “Dimples”

MELODY AJUPA

FABRIC OF FRIENDSHIP FASHIONED BY THE LOOM OF FAITH



Greetings Regal Sisters,

“Fabric of Friendship Fashioned by the Loom of Faith” is being established as part of our Melody Ajupa Program. “Melody Ajupa” is a community service program established by MMSI in 2011. The word “Ajupa” comes from the Taino people who used the ajupa as a temporary shelter during harvest time to hold their crops before distribution to the village. With the Melody Ajupa Program, we collect items such as food, books and clothing which are donated to organizations that distribute them to people in need.

This Melody Ajupa: *“Fabric of Friendship Fashioned by Loom of Faith”* consists of MMSI Binky blankets and *“Precious Hearts”* character hats. Gracious Melody Maria Lopez has created and donated over 100 hats throughout the USA, Sweden, Canada, Australia and England. Sisters of MMSI have created and donated blankets aka “binkies”. A “Binky” is a homemade blanket that can be sewn, knitted, crocheted or quilted. They range in size from 3 feet square up to twin bed size. Smaller binkies range from 2’x2’ for preemie babies.

We invite you to join us as we donate to our Precious Heart Babies on Thursday, October 22, 2015 from 10am - 12pm at Montefiore Medical Center - The Children’s Hospital, Bronx, NY. Our sister Maria Lopez, founder and creator of “Precious Hearts 1969” and an adult cardiac patient at the hospital along with Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc., will be donating knitted hats and blankets (binkies) to the babies with [Tetralogy of Fallot Congenital Heart Disease](#).

Please consider helping us distribute these warm binkies and knitted hats to these precious babies. Please contact MalikMelodiesPB@gmail.com or Maria Lopez at mvicki2004@gmail.com or 718-902-4555.

The next **Bink-a-thon** will be held on **Saturday, October 24 from 8am - 11am** at Three Village School Central School District - Setauket School, 134 Main Street, East Setauket, NY 11733. Please contact Nathalie Lilavois at nlilavois910@gmail.com or 516-476-2592.

Warm Regards,
Sharon Harleston
MMSI Professional Branch President

*Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc.
~We Are the Shoulders of Today for Tomorrow's Future~*

“In helping others, we shall help ourselves, for whatever good we give out completes the circle and comes back to us.”
Flora Edwards

SAVE THE DATE!



The Queens of
Long Island

Binky Patrol

IS BACK!

www.binkypatrol.org

National Make A Difference Day!

**Three Village
Bink-a-thon!**
Sat. October 24th, 2015
Setauket School
8am-11am

For details contact GM Nathalie C.
Lilavois nlilavois910@gmail.com



OUR CIVIC AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILTY NEVER ENDS!

Binky Patrol is an all-volunteer national non-profit organization dedicated to making and delivering homemade blankets to children and teens in need of comfort. Visit our website: www.binkypatrol.org

WHAT'S NEW?!

By Most Gracious Melody Kim J. Bright



MMSI Contributes to Building History!

MMSI contributes annually to the building of the new [National Museum of African American History and Culture](#) in Washington, DC. To learn more about the history behind building's design in the shape of a Yoruba "Corona" or "Crown" visit: <http://www.nbcnews.com/video/the-newest-smithsonian-museum-wears-a-crown-527437891876> (2:36 minutes). Be a part of history and donate today!

Don't Forget!!! Join our Sister Anita Gillespie-Wallace and "Team Dimples" at the [Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk](#)

Sun Oct 18, 2015 8:45am – 12:00pm

Jones Beach State Park, Wantagh, NY 11793

For more information, see the previous article or contact : MalikMelodiesPB@gmail.com

KUDOS!! & Congrats to Bro. Shawuki S. Hilton, ESQ. on passing the Florida Bar Exam!!!

Professional Development

Graduating or recent graduate? Need to freshen up your resume or write a cover letter? Visit Tulane University's website for some great resume and cover letter writing tips at:

<http://tulane.edu/hiretulane/students/resume.cfm>

We would love to feature your talent, hobbies, poetry, thoughts and ideas! We are always interested in diverse opinions and topics of interest by guest authors. If you'd like to contribute a feature article, please send your ideas to TheGraces@gmail.com. Thank you!



If you wish to recommend a Sister or yourself for "Melodies on the Move!!" please contact GM Nathalie Lilavois, Ed.D. nlilavois910@gmail.com