

On June 11, the Kips Bay Neighborhood Alliance held the 1st of 3 Summer Community Day Celebrations on the 2nd Avenue service road between 30th & 33rd Streets. Included were local musicians, storytelling, zumba lessons, pet training, bicycle tune-ups, chess games, and face painting.

Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, Congresswoman Maloney and City Council Members Daniel Garodnick and Rosie Mendez held a ceremony to honor P.S. 116's winning finalists (see attached). Foysal Uddin placed first and Deborah Wei placed second in New York State in the 2011 Celebrate America essay contest sponsored by the American Immigration Council ("AIC").



Two more fun filled Saturdays to come on July 9 and August 13, 11am – 4pm at Kips Bay Plaza on Second Avenue between E. 30th & E. 33rd Streets.

Finalist #1

Melting Pot

By Foysal Uddin

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "America is another name for opportunity. Our whole history appears like a last effort of divine providence on behalf of the human race." He was trying to convey that America is full of opportunities and makes itself welcome to all. Immigration is a big event in America: America grew larger because of immigrants.

When my dad came to America he was very scared. He was terrified of this new place and what it had in store for him. Many immigrants felt this way. Many of my dad's friends also felt scared. His friends were also Southeast Asian, which made him feel very relieved because now he wouldn't just be living with one race in America. Many cultures also came to America with its immigrants: new food, new beliefs or religion, new ideas and many more aspects of culture were exposed. Everyone had come to America with a piece of their life, rituals and customs from their country and a heart full of dreams. They were willing to sweat and face all the obstacles in order to create a bright future for their children and the future generations.

When my mom had come to America she was very anxious of what was going to happen once she set foot in this foreign land with all of its foreign faces and languages. She believed that she could have a healthy, loving, and happy family in America. Immigrants come with a dream of starting a new life and building their family. My mom had felt excited yet lost because she was a woman with no formal education, and living in this big country with so many children was not going to be easy. She would live in a tenement with six children, and two rooms would be too crowded. She was looking forward to her new lease on life, but also unhappy that she left her entire family back home and will not see them for years. After a few years, she obtained love for America, the country that opens its arms to everyone who wants to live better.

Immigration in this country keeps us flowing. Without any diversity, this country would not have good fortune and development. Diverse people have various experiences and ways of thinking which opens doors for all of us to learn and grow from each other. Without immigration we would be one race, one religion, living in one country. That is uninteresting because in order to progress, we must absorb each other's cultures. America is a melting pot and we are the different cultures and religions, the ingredients in the pot. Without one ingredient, the dish is incomplete. Our lifestyles have brought us to a united country and intertwined our minds. Immigration has broadened the horizons and depth of this country, and it will continue to do its best because it has different people from all over the world in the palm of its hands.

Finalist #2

Mixed America

By Deborah Wei

"It's so crowded in America. Why does America have so many people?" groaned Mary. Cristine really disliked her.

"Well, because of immigrants, America is a nation full of immigrants," replied Cristine, with a small smile. She was adopted from China.

"So why does America let immigrants come? It's not like we need them," Mary commented. Cristine blushed. Cristine didn't tell that many people that she was born in China. Cristine's eyes flushed with anger. I could feel a history lesson coming soon.

"Actually, immigrants started America. People from Great Britain came to the 'New World.' They later fought against Great Britain and won independence. Long later, the United States of America was born. So if immigrants didn't come in the beginning, we would all be British, basically," explained Cristine knowing that Mary wasn't listening, but just had to let out her anger.

"Um...okay?" replied Mary, rudely. "So anything else these immigrants did? I bet that's all they did that was important."

"Oh, really? The immigrants from all over the world brought foods and inventions," countered Cristine, her cheeks flushing red.

"Like what?" asked Mary, not realizing Cristine's anger.

"Okay, I'll make you a deal; you can only use things that are invented in America!" Cristine said, close to yelling.

"Fine by me," Mary sniffed.

Ding. Mary's phone received a text. She flipped it open. Cristine grinned. The phone was invented by Doctor Martin Cooper, whose ancestors were Ukrainian. "You have to get off; the phone was invented by a doctor from the Ukraine," Cristine whispered.

"Wait, Danielle sent me a text and pictures of her puppy!" exclaimed Mary.

"Can I see?" Cristine asked eagerly.

"Sure," Mary replied. She handed Cristine her phone.

"Oh, this one is my favorite," Cristine cooed.

"Which one?" Mary asked, curiously.

"This one," Cristine replied, hitting the power button. Mary groaned and slipped on her glasses.

"Are you near-sighted or far-sighted?" asked Cristine, mischievously.

"I'm both, why?" Mary responded.

"Those are bifocals, invented also by Benjamin Franklin," I replied smugly. It was fun watching Mary learn her lesson, but Mary never liked losing.

"Let's paint!" suggested Cristine, smirking, getting out her tempera paints.

"Yay, I'll get my paintbrush out!" Mary said, delighted. Relieved to do something she could actually do.

"No, you can't," Cristine said.

"Yes, I can! Brushes were made in America," remembered Mary, never forgetting about her favorite hobby.

"In the Stone Age, before America became a country," Cristine countered back. Mary sighed deeply and placed back her brush.

"Girls, put on your PJ's," my mom said from my doorway.

"Okay," we chorused back.

We all went to separate corners and changed. Mary turned around wearing silk pajamas.

"Silk, silkworms, China," Cristine informed.

"Okay, okay, I give up!" Mary heaved out. Cristine smiled.

"Repeat after me," Cristine commanded. "Immigrants are useful and needed. America wouldn't be America without them." I could tell Cristine was enjoying her revenge and proving Mary wrong. What was the best part? That Mary repeated it back to Cristine.



To get involved or for further information, please contact Kips Bay Neighborhood Alliance at kipsbayneighborhoodalliance@gmail.com