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Horizon Science Academy celebrates Hispanic heritage

By Kevin Martin

The Morning Journal

Horizon Science Academy of Lorain marked Hispanic Heritage Month with an evening of music, dance and cuisine on Oct. 12.

In the cafeteria of the school located at 760 Tower Blvd., guests got to experience a taste of Hispanic heritage with performances from Horizon students in addition to learning about the history of Lorain's Hispanic community.

"We love to see our students performing with all the parents coming. We hope they enjoy the food and dances," said Principal Faith Sumer.

Guests were treated to a Latin percussion demonstration, featuring traditional rhythmic styles from Puerto Rico and other parts of the Caribbean. It incorporated a number of different percussion instruments within Latin jazz, including traditional wooden clave sticks and a rhythm box called a cajon.

Keynote speakers were Sarah Johnson and Nelly Davila of Lorain's El Centro de Servicios Sociales. They highlighted the history of Lorain's Hispanic community and the organization's role in providing assistance since being founded in 1974 by a group of local clergy and community leaders.

"We were founded to serve mostly a Puerto-Rican immigrant community during the industrial period of Lorain's history but we now serve all residents of Lorain County. We were the first social service agency in the area to serve the Latino population," Johnson said.

Johnson, a grant writer with El Centro, recalled the early days of Hispanic immigration to Lorain in the early 1920s after they were recruited to work for U.S. Steel and their role in contributing to the social fabric of the area with the development of Sacred Heart Chapel, The Puerto Rican Home in addition to El Centro.

"The city of Lorain has one of the largest Puerto Rican



Eric Bonzar — The Morning Journal

Twelve-year-old Lisa Ortiz and her fellow dancers of Esencia Boricua Cultural de Lorain perform during Horizon Science Academy of Lorain's Hispanic Celebration Dinner, Oct. 12, 2017.

communities in the United States," Johnson said. "Those immigrants not only serve our economy but have benefited our community economically and served as pillars of our community."

The evening concluded with a performance by dance troupe Esencia Boricua Cultural de Lorain. It performed traditional and contemporary Puerto Rican dances. Director Rosie Garcia said the group, which features girls between the ages of 9 and 13, was founded in 2011 to promote and preserve Puerto Rican culture.

Horizon Student performances included Jacob Vargas and Delson Torres-Castro in a vocal rendition of "Despacito" while My'Jia Brown accompanied by Samuel Trinidad on acoustic guitar performed "Moscas En La Casa," highlighting efforts by the Horizon community to share in Lorain's Hispanic heritage."