

Staten Island students salute Broadway musicals

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Photos courtesy of

Inside BroadwayRep. Michael McMahon congratulates students at PS 13, Rosebank, who participated in a "Salute to Broadway" theater arts education program he funded at the school during his tenure as a City Council member.

ROSEBANK -- Listen up! The sweet sounds coming from the hallways and classrooms at PS 13 are the same melodies many of you have heard on the Broadway stage.

About 120 of the school's students have been participating in a 12-week program offering a behind-the-scenes look at Broadway musicals, thanks to Rep. Michael McMahon.

McMahon, recently sworn in to the U.S. House of Representatives, funded the "Salute To Broadway" arts education program for the last three years at the Rosebank school, as a member of the City Council. Presented by the citywide non-profit Inside Broadway, the program enables children to work with a professional theater teaching artist. The musical they create and perform helps spur their creativity and imagination.

Five third- and fifth-grade classes participated in this year's initiative. Teaching artist Braddon Mehrten came once a week to teach basic choreography and songs from Broadway musicals past and present, including Disney's "The Lion King," "Oliver!," "Cats" and "Mary Poppins."



Lara Sandoval, left, and Haminat Adetunji, both fifth-graders at PS 13 in Rosebank, participated in a "Salute to Broadway" theater arts education program at the school.

"It's an excellent program. Students learn about the musical theater, dance, movement and song. They also get to practice teamwork and boost their literacy and listening skills," said Joann Toto, PS 13 arts coordinator.

For fifth-grader Lara Sandoval, who said she "always wanted to be a singer," the Broadway theater program was "like a dream come true."

"All the dancing and singing skills we learned were great," she declared.

Fifth-grader Haminat Adetunji said the theater program helped him develop self-confidence and a stick-to-it attitude. "We learned we should never give up and we should always do our best," he said.

Just before he headed down to Washington, D.C., PS 13 students got to show off for McMahan and Inside Broadway founder and executive director Michael Presser. "The students at PS 13 have shown themselves to be real Broadway pros," Presser said.

According to Presser, the program serves more than 80 public schools throughout the city each year.

"We're about getting the kids involved in the theater at an early age, as well as building a future audience and an appreciation for the Broadway musical theater," he said.

In addition to sending teaching artists to the schools, Inside Broadway produces professional productions of classic Broadway musicals that are performed in school auditoriums citywide. The special 50-minute adaptations have included Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Cinderella," "Bye Bye Birdie," "On the Town," "The Pirates of Penzance" and "Kiss Me Kate." On tap for the spring is a production of "Smokey Joe's Cafe." Teachers and administrators seeking more information on the program can go to www.insidebroadway.org.

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