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## EDUCATION

### 'Month of the Young Child' Kick Off at Plainfield City Hall

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**PLAINFIELD, NJ - The 31<sup>st</sup> Annual "Month of the Young Child" celebration kicked off on the steps of City Hall in Plainfield on Tuesday morning.**

**The event started with Evelyn Motley, the Director of Plainfield Public Schools Early Childhood Programs and Services, welcoming students, teachers, administrators and**

members of the public. She then introduced members of the Plainfield High School's band who performed two songs.

Plainfield Public Schools' Interim Superintendent Ronald Bolandi said he has spent 25 years in New Jersey as a Superintendent of schools.

"I always would look at Plainfield's early childhood pre-school program and always wonder someday if I ever would have one in a school district that I was in. Because I don't know if you realize that you are blessed with having, in my opinion, one of the best, if not *the* best early childhood programs, not only in New Jersey but in the country," Bolandi said.

Board of Education President Richard Wyatt said, "I believe that children are the future. Teach them well, and let them lead the way."

Ron West, Director of Administration and Finance, Health and Social Services made remarks on behalf of Plainfield Mayor Adrian O. Mapp.

Dee Dameron, Co-Chair of P.I.E.C.E.S. Early Childhood Advisory Council, said, "Early childhood education, combined with high quality teachers, can significantly improve a child's life. With all that is happening in today's society, the children should be our primary focus. It is our duty as the 'village' to be their stimulation and motivation for change."

Students from three schools treated attendees to musical performances.

- Al & Jeans, Inc., Preschool - directed by Beverly Fisher, with lead teachers Ismat Rizvi and Janki Sutaria
- Dawn to Dusk Childcare Center - directed by Kemi Adegunwa, with lead teachers Fanisha Clark, Nelcy Guzman, Jennifer Ramos, and Awilda Rosario
- Cedarbrook School - with Principal Gwynetta Joe, and lead teachers Antoinette Ramirez, Maria Doroteo, and Tenisha Fort.

The Office of Early Childhood launched a new initiative this year that is designed to increase father engagement, and improve early literacy development by creating child-friendly reading spaces in local barbershops.

Some of those barbers were in attendance at the morning's event.

A ribbon cutting and collection of book donations for the barbershops concluded the ceremony.

The Second Street Youth Center (SSYC) continued the day's celebration at its location, holding an open house after the speeches and performances at city hall, featuring a display of art and other creations produced by its students.

Architectural renderings of the new site currently under construction, which will be located at 200 Plainfield Avenue, were available for viewing.