

DREAM'S ALIVE



NEIL BACON JOURNAL PHOTOS

FIRST-GRADER BEBE FREEMAN, portraying Rosa Parks, is led away by policemen, left to right, Kenneth Jamison, Razel Williams and Austin Henry, during a performance at the Learning Community Charter School yesterday.

Everyone in the act as school celebrates King's legacy

By ALI WINSTON
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In an assembly that would have touched Martin Luther King Jr.'s heart, students, faculty and parents of the Learning Community Charter School in Jersey City joined in

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a program of song, art and dance yesterday to honor the slain civil rights leader.

"He put his life on the line every day for equality, and paid the ultimate price for democracy" said Principal Susan Grierson about King, who would have turned 77 this Monday.

A troupe of step dancers led off the event with an intricate and enthusiastic routine. Their efforts were greeted with wild applause from their 320 kindergarten-through-eighth grade classmates.



FIRST-GRADER JANET MAH, second from right, holds her page from an LCCS book project called "My Dream Is ..." yesterday at the Learning Community Charter School. Elena Cuevas, right, and other fourth-graders were paired with first-graders.

A first-grade class enacted a brief skit about Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the seminal civil rights protest she started and King led. In a twist that would have surely tickled Parks and King, the student playing Parks was white and the three policemen

who ushered her off the bus were black.

"He (King) was a really peaceful man," said Cairo Richards, the 6-year-old first-grader who played King in the skit.

Second-graders recited famous King quotations, and

the third-graders displayed a collage they made of images about King and the Civil Rights Movement.

"It's a pretty good atmosphere. The children are from every background imaginable," said Mendes Toussaint, parent of a third-grader and a kindergartner at the school.

According to school officials, LCCS's student body is 40 percent African-American, 32 percent white, 16 percent Hispanic, and 12 percent Asian.

Seventh-graders took turns reading King's "I Have a Dream" speech, while the eighth-graders presented poems based on King's non-violent, multicultural and antiwar messages.

This was the second year LCCS held an all-school assembly in King's honor.

"We chose to make a big deal out of this because Martin Luther King's values are those of this school," Grierson said. "By making this an event for the whole school, this holiday will have that much more meaning for our students."



**RIGHTS
FIGHTS
RETOLD**

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