

World Festival has Job Corps and AHS rocking

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Event features traditions from all over

Long ago, when all the animals of the world could talk, God would call them together for a yearly meeting.

Every creature would show up – that is every creature but the dragon. God finally became so upset with the dragon’s disobedience that he decided to send a man out to search for him and mete out the punishment of having to dance every New Year.

The dragon still dances today, his antics bringing good luck, peace, power and prosperity to the homes and businesses it passes.

An audience of students and community members was able to enjoy that Asian tradition Saturday during the third annual World Festival, a cultural celebration put on by Astoria High School and Tongue Point Job Corps Center in the high school’s commons.

Cultural dances

In addition to the Dragon Dance, where a red-headed dragon blinked its eyelids and flapped its large mouth as its scaly black body twisted gracefully, attendees witnessed fashions from other countries, sampled food from around the world, investigated cultural display tables and watched dances from different cultures.

Antwain Humburgs, a 21-year-old culinary student at Tongue Point, rocked his pelvis, slapped his side, and waved his arms during a Hip Hop demonstration. The moves were based on the “Goodies” video, by Ciara.

“Hip Hop is basically expressive feelings and the way you feel,” said Humburgs, who has been dancing since age 9 and learned his moves from a choreographer in Baton Rouge, La. “It’s all on the beat of the song.”

Marisela Godinez, an 18-year-old in the dental assisting program, demonstrated an Aztec dance with three other girls. It was a dance that has been passed down through her family and to Godinez by her great-grandmother, Maria Acevdo.

“It’s a really big honor to me,” she said. “My great-grandmother, who died last year, she was my idol and to have learned something from her and her parents was nice.”

Godinez said she’ll one day teach that same dance to her own children, although it won’t

be the first one they learn. Mexican tradition dictates that the first dance her children learn will be the one she dances with her husband on their wedding day.

All in a Day's Work

The World Festival culminates a year-long fund-raising campaign for Operation Day's Work, an international youth organization that increases youth awareness of international issues and supports service projects.

Students in the Astoria High School service learning class and Operation Day's Work club have collected nearly \$1,000 this year. The money, along with 400 books they collected through an earlier book drive, will be going to the Broughton Orphanage and School in Muppalla, India. The Kancharlas, an Astoria family, run the orphanage.

Sarah Price, a senior at Astoria High School who coordinated the World Festival as her senior project, said some of the funds will be used to buy uniforms for the students.

"If they're all wearing the same thing, it breaks down the caste system a little," she said.

Nikole Allen, formerly Engel, started the World Festival three years ago after learning about Operation Day's Work fund-raisers in Norway. Allen is now a freshman at Western Oregon University studying international relations, a major she chose because of Operation Day's Work's influence.

"It provides on so many different levels," she said. "The students learn about the country. The service projects they do help the community. On an international level they're aiding peers."

Good food

While the festival got off to a slower start, by the time lunch rolled around, there was a long line for Asian spring rolls, South African Chin-Chin (spicy doughnuts), baklava, empanadas and apple strudel. Tongue Point culinary students prepared all of the food.

"(The World Festival) brings everyone together to share different music, culture, style, fashion, meet people you may not have met before," said Antoinette Cunningham, 19, who just graduated from the office technologies program at Tongue Point. "It's nice to see people celebrate different cultures, especially during Black History Month."