

May 31, 2010



Figure 1 Tilina the Chihuahua with friends Beth Stafford and Eden Gil

Newland Elementary Celebrates Hispanic Culture

Among the many celebratory events taking place as the school year came to an end was an afternoon of Latin-style fun for the students and teachers of Newland Elementary School. Organized by school leaders Lee Hardin and Beth Stafford and sponsored by the Avery Arts Council, the celebration on May 26 presented sights, sounds and flavors from the Hispanic homelands of some Avery County families.

Mothers of Hispanic children who attend Newland Elementary pitched in to make the party a success. Children from Kindergarten through fifth grade met Margarita Monica and her hand-tied hammocks and Elytania Arreola with examples of her embroidery and crochet work. As the students talked with Maria Aparicio, who was constructing a piñata, they learned how to make colorful tissue paper flowers from Sarita Ballinas.

Everyone found the Latino dances great fun, and then it was time for refreshments – homemade rice and beans wrapped in a corn tortilla. Cooks Feliciano Herrera, Joaquina Sanchez, and Luisa Calderon stayed busy tending the griddles so that everyone could have a fresh tortilla.

Beth Stafford, an interpreter/translator for Avery County schools, gave students a tour of a large map of Mexico. She noted where each of the school's students of Mexican ancestry are from and gave those students a chance to share their history with classmates. A special



Figure 2 Feliciano Herrera, Joaquina Sanchez, and Luisa Calderon provided refreshments for the celebration

visitor to the party was Tilina, a Chihuahua belonging to Lee Hardin. Hardin, who is the Limited English Proficient Coordinator (LEP) for Avery County Schools, made sure that Tilina was dressed appropriately in sombrero and serape for the festivities.

Arts Council vice president Rebecca Warner, who was on hand to help with the paper flower-making, said that she hoped the Latin Heritage Celebration would become an annual event that could include students from all Avery schools.

The Avery County Arts Council is a non-profit organization working to enrich the people of Avery County through meaningful arts and cultural experiences. For more than 30 years the council has helped to support school arts programs and served as a resource for artists and the community. Contact the Avery County Arts Council at 828-898-4292 or info@averycountyartscouncil.org