

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** March 18, 2008  
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**CONGRESSWOMAN NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ AND  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY CHARLES HYNES  
HONOR BUSHWICK WOMEN**



BROOKLYN ó In a celebration of International Women's Day, Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez and Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes honored seven Bushwick women on Saturday, March 15, for their contributions to the community. The event at the DeKalb Branch of Brooklyn Public Library was sponsored by Agenda for Children Tomorrow's Bushwick IMPACT project and the national nonprofit organization Family Justice.

As part of a ceremony honoring women for efforts on behalf of their children's education and broadly in the community, Congresswoman Velázquez spoke about growing up as one of nine children in Puerto Rico. She said that although her family lived in poverty, "I grew up with a mother and father who, through all the obstacles that they faced, every day they showed how much they loved their children." She praised Bushwick IMPACT and Family Justice, saying, "It is important that while I am fighting [in Washington] I know that organizations are here fighting every day to protect our community."

District Attorney Hynes spoke personally as well, describing a childhood marked by domestic violence and his father's alcoholism. "Were it not for my mother and her never giving up on me, I don't know where I would be," he told the Bushwick audience. "In a sense, the mothers here who work so hard for their children are re-creating what my mother did."

Both elected officials stressed the importance of education. As District Attorney Hynes told the audience, "Education for the children is critical to success." Congresswoman Velázquez agreed: "I invite you to learn more," she said. "Education is key. Education is power: It is the key that opens doors."

The women honored at Saturday's ceremony were community members Ana Fernández and Sister Elizabeth "Betty" Nickels; and parents Simona Flores, Sabina Mendoza, Yolanda De Jesús, Verónica Bermeo, and Eudocia Rodríguez.

During the Saturday-afternoon program, attended by about 125 people, Bushwick children received Brooklyn Public Library cards and books that had been donated for the event. Parents, mostly women, participated in poetry workshops, made arts and crafts, and received free massages while their children made baskets, picture frames, and decorations.

Bushwick IMPACT invests in the community's parents so that as proactive advocates they can help foster their children's potential, their family's well-being, and the community's quality of life, as well as influence the policies that affect their families and neighborhoods. For more information, go to [www.bushwickimpact.org](http://www.bushwickimpact.org) and <http://www.actnyc.org/Impact.html>.

Family Justice taps the strengths of families, communities, and government throughout the country to develop innovative, cost-effective solutions that benefit people at greatest risk of cycling in and out of the justice system. For more information, go to [www.familyjustice.org](http://www.familyjustice.org).