

## New Hope School's choir paid its annual visit to Clifton City Hall to sing carols

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On December 19, New Hope School's choir paid its annual visit to Clifton City Hall to sing Christmas carols for Clifton Mayor, James Anzaldi, and his staff. Led by choir director Chieko Akashi, the 14-student choir sang a number of holiday favorites, including "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" and "Silent Night." Gathered in the main foyer of City Hall along with the mayor and his staff were several New Hope School staff and parents and many by-passers who stopped to watch the impromptu concert.

After the performance, Merlyn Loja and several Jin-A students presented the mayor with a holiday gift on behalf of Jin-A Child Care Center. In turn the mayor's staff presented New Hope School and Jin-A with Christmas coloring books for all the students.

The following day, New Hope School held its annual Winter Concert at the Clifton Family Church for the benefit of the students' families and friends. Pastor Manoj Jacob of the Clifton Family Church started things off with a prayer which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and the New Hope School Pledge. Next came the musical portion of the program, led by music director Chieko Akashi, in which each class sang or played instruments to various holiday songs.

After a few skit performances, New Hope School's dance class, led by Elena Bahian, then performed the Praise Dance and Unconditional Love, both of which were performed at the recent Peace Starts With Me event at Nassau Coliseum.

Following the skit performances came a class-by-class reading of the winning student essays on the topic of Generosity. The essays noted that generosity is a natural result of living for the sake of others and brings benefit both to oneself as well as to others. This year's readings were done by William Curry, Lilly Dabal, Kenji Onishi, and Kenko Morikawa, as well as a joint reading by the entire first grade class.



Following this, all the participants partook in a candle light prayer for peace in which candles were distributed to all the adults present and then lit one-by-one. When all the candles were lit, the lights were dimmed, and anyone who was inspired was invited to come forth and offer a prayer for peace.

Lastly, all the students gathered on stage for the grand finale, singing together "Christmas Joy" and "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing." As the students descended from the stage and the program was coming to an end, Santa entered the room as a surprise guest. The evening wound down with children getting their pictures taken with Santa and received various goodies he had brought.

