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It ain't Mozart, but it sings

"We did this to claim back this park," says David Ramos, parent support coordinator of the Hyde Square Task Force, and organizer of the second annual "Evenings in Mozart Park" series every Thursday in August.

At 6 p.m., the sounds of salsa, merengue, and bachata echo through Hyde Square, inviting local residents to the corners of Mozart and Centre Streets for basketball, soccer, and hula hoop competitions. Parents chat with their neighbors; teenagers ride in on lowrider bicycles. Face-painters color kids with "100 percent Boricua" or "100 percent Dominican" body paint tattoos.

"It's good to see families and kids here," says Gillian Grossman, a JP resident and development coordinator of the Hyde Square Task Force.

Mozart Park has had a hard time shedding its image as a drug dealer and

gang hangout ever since a shooting occurred nearby during a 1991 ribbon-cutting attended by then-Mayor Ray Flynn. "There hasn't been a violent incident

here in years," says Boston police officer David Roberto of the park. Roberto has been patrolling the area for thirteen years. But he expresses concern for the park's upkeep and future safety.

"This park needs maintenance. It didn't look like this last year," says Roberto, pointing out litter in the bushes. "City money is very tight this year, and there have been cuts to safety funding. . . . We need more activities like these."



"Evenings at Mozart Park" feature, among other things, ball playing.

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