PHOTO BY AMY SYLVESTRI

The San Leandro High Step Dance Team performed Monday at the Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration at the Marina Community Center.

By Amy Sylvestri

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"Remember the Dream" was the theme of the celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the Marina Community Center on Monday.

The children of San Leandro did just that, as more than a dozen young speakers took the microphone and recited famous speeches as well as their own essays and poems in honor of King.

The event also featured dancing from the San Leandro High step dance team and a speech from Daphne Muse, an author and professor.

In the 6- to 9-year-old age bracket, the winning speech was given by Nicholas Petrequin, who recited King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech complete with gestures and a Southern accent.

Isabella Rodriguez came in second place with her own composition, "In a Perfect World."

"In a perfect world, we would all be friends," said Rodriguez. "In a perfect world, there would be no hate. Let's respect each other. Think to yourself, what would your perfect world be?"

Keynote speaker Muse said that the Martin Luther King celebration was especially poignant as it was held on the same day as Barack Obama was sworn in to a second term as president. Muse called Obama "another manifestation of the dream becoming a reality."

Muse then spoke about the history of San Leandro and the women and minorities who have helped shape the city, from the Ohlone Indians, to Fred Korematsu, to current City Councilwoman (and the event's MC) Ursula Reed.

Muse encouraged everyone to go home and pull out a family photo album and consider the role their own families have played in the history of San Leandro and the world at large.

"This is America," said Muse. "Right here in this room, at this moment."

The other winners were Olivia Sally and Anvita Alok Vyas who won first and second place receptively in the 10- to 13-year-old bracket and Henry Wijaya won first and Sydnei Jones took second in the 14- to 17 year-old-age group.