

# *The* MILLERTON NEWS

*This article originally appeared in the September 27, 2012 edition of The Millerton News. © 2012 The Lakeville Journal Company, LLC. Hosted/Reprinted with Permission.*

## A harvest festival with Latin flare

AMENIA — Hispanics here are working to bring culture and fun to the entire community by letting people know they have made a home in the Harlem Valley.

Somos La Llave del Futuro held its second annual Latin-style harvest festival, Kermes La Cosecha, on Sunday, Sept. 23, at the Amenia Town Hall gymnasium.

The festival was intended to share Latino culture with residents of all backgrounds. The evening featured music and dancing by Los Ciegos del Barrio, a band that plays well-known Latin music from New York City.

There was also a presentation of traditional Mexican dance by Grupo Folklorico de Poughkeepsie. The evening also included traditional games and a tamale contest, where people voted to determine the winner of the best tamales from a selection of Latin America's best tamaleras. There was fresh food for sale, family games and information on human services from local agencies.

"We did get a wonderful grant

from the Dutchess Arts Council to pay for the band," said Louisa Lindenmeyr, president of Somos La Llave del Futuro. "Maybe we make a little money but that's not really the point. The point is more about opening up to the community and making everybody feel welcome here."

Somos La Llave del Futuro is a Latino advocacy group in the Hudson Valley focused in the northeastern corner of the county. The purpose of the group is to help the Latino community feel a sense of unity and to become a part of and leaders of the community.

Volunteer students from Millbrook and Webutuck school districts were in attendance Sunday evening to help as part of their community service, they set up and served food and cleaned up afterward.

Executive Director of Somos La Llave del Futuro Gabriela Pragman said that next year they will likely need a bigger space for the harvest festival, but as far as this year went the event was terrific. There was a diverse range of people in atten-



PHOTO BY ARVOLYN HILL

**Somos La Llave del Futuro's Latin Harvest Festival featured traditional Latin music by the live band Los Ciegos del Barrio, which lured people onto the dance floor.**

dance, from local leaders to residents, farmers to students. There were also just folks looking to enjoy their Sunday afternoon with Latin flare.

"Well, it's not just about tolerance but love and brotherhood and the feeling that these people are here to stay," said Lindenmeyr. "For many of them, they have chil-

dren here in the school district and they are hard core residents here in Dutchess County. We have wonderful things to offer and we just want to keep building bridges so the traditional people who live here and the newcomers alike can continue to get to know one another and share the wonderful riches of both cultures."