

# In the Community

## Students pay tribute to Pastor Donnie McClurkin, Jr. by naming PS5 Music Room in his honor

By Keith L. Forest  
Guest Scribe

Students, parents, faculty, and staff of Dr. Ronald E. McNair Public School 5, recently joined local civic, community leaders, and neighbors for an official dedication of the Donnie McClurkin, Jr. Music Room. The Grammy Award-winning Gospel Recording Artist McClurkin was also feted with a school tour, and full school assembly that included student art and music presentations featuring a solo performance by Brooklyn Laboratory Charter School student Joshua Joseph. "I'm truly honored" shared Pastor McClurkin, who was emotionally touched seeing his name on a physical space in his honor, expressed his gratitude by serenading the audience in song performing the timely gospel hit "May the Work I've Done Speak for Me."

The Donnie McClurkin, Jr. Music Room is a state-of-the-art music facility where students will receive performance-driven instructional lessons on a variety of musical instruments including the violin, clarinet, flute, trumpets, trombone, saxophone, and African drums. It is also the future home of a full-service podcast and music engineer studio, where students will be able to learn the art of producing their own podcast shows, and musical productions.

"This is truly a full circle moment," shared Principal Lena Gates, who personally invited McClurkin to the school several years ago. At that time, the Bedford-Stuyvesant elementary school was



Pastor Donnie McClurkin, Jr. receives an artistic rendering from student Asani Enriquez (All photos by Qlick)

one of the lowest performing schools in the district, plagued with poor attendance, decreasing number of teachers, and low-test scores. "He simply provided timely words of encouragement and helped

us cast a vision for building and creating a school where children are valued and the community at large benefits. Since then, we've been on an upward spiral."

A few years after McClur-



Brooklyn Laboratory Charter School student Joshua Joseph perform for Pastor Donnie McClurkin, Jr.

kin's visit, PS5 test scores began to rise, and enrollment has increased. Under Principal Gates' leadership, the school recently launched The Dr. Ronald E. McNair Aviation Center Sponsored by American Airlines, providing young aviators topflight instructions on flight simulators and field trips to local airports where they receive real life experiences flying actual planes. Other programs include A Science Technology Engineer and Math (STEM) Program that provides training in Artificial Intelligence (AI), and 3D technology; a financial literacy program that operates out of the school's own student-run bookstore; and an urban garden program that supplies fresh produce to local eateries and teaches children

how to prepare nutritionally balanced meals.

Located in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, the Ronald E. McNair Public School 5 affirms as its central mission that every child has the right to a quality education in safe and secure environment which reflects high expectations and high academic standards; that literacy is the first and most essential goal; and that every child can and will succeed in ways that mirror his or her own aptitudes; interests and culture. PS5 supports collaboration among staff, parents, and community groups, to ensure that each child will become a contributing member of his or her community, our nation, and the world of the 21st Century



Caitlyn Smith, Joshua Joseph, Arturo Lopez, Principal Lena Gates, Pastor Donnie McClurkin, Jr., City Councilwoman Darlene Mealy, Pastor Dr. Robert Waterman, Carter Bryant, Cache Grandison, Deputy School Superintendent Kenya Smith, Adani Enriquez, School District 16 Executive Director Lanika Vane, PS5 Vice Principal Cindi VanPetten



Pastor Donnie McClurkin, Jr., Kenya Smith, Deputy School Superintendent, Darlene Mealy, NYC City Councilwoman, Cache Grandison, Detective Conrad Narcisse, Caitlyn Smith, School District 16 Executive Director, Principal Lena Gates, Joshua Joseph and Pastor Dr. Robert Waterman