

A taste of the Andes comes to Dorchester Street

Peter Van Delft

Bulletin Staff

Many are familiar with the paraphrase of the old adage "If the mountain won't come to you, you must go to the mountain." For one lucky group in South Boston, the mountain actually came to them. In fact, it was not just a mountain, but a whole range of mountains.

This past Thursday, Cesar Villalobos—the founder and director of the Andean music, dance, and cultural education group Inca Son—brought the music, dance, and culture of his homeland in the Andes Mountains of Peru, South America to the program participants and staff of Julie's Family Learning Center on Dorchester Street.

Studying the culture of Native American peoples throughout the month of October and into November—with a focus on Peru and the Andes—members of the program got the rare opportunity to hear some of the authentic music of the country and learn various historic facts directly from one of its sources.

"I come from Peru, South America," said Cesar Villalobos. "I am from a small village in the Andes Mountains in Peru. I'm the oldest of 13 children. I am a teacher, a dancer, and a musician. I was a tour guide for 22 years. My grandfather was a shaman, one of the biggest. He was 116 years old. My name is Inti. In school, they changed my name to Cesar because people were making fun of me. But now, when I go to schools, they call me 'Cesar Salad.' In English, Inca Son means 'this is my heartbeat.'"

Traveling both alone and with other members of Inca Son, Villalobos has become something of a student of the world with his many journeys.

"I've traveled all over the world playing music for little babies all the way up to grandmas and grandpas," said Villalobos. "We've played in all over North and South America as well as Russia." A look at his ever-



The crowd at Julie's Family Learning Center sat in rapt attention as Cesar Villalobos of Inca Son (off camera) performed traditional music of the Andes in Peru, South America.

PHOTOS BY PETER VAN DELFT

lengthening schedule reveals that Villalobos will also visit Ohio, Wisconsin, California, as well as Maine, Florida, and many points in between.

Describing the circumstances that led to his interest in music and dance, Villalobos also provided a window into what life might be like growing up in the Andes.

