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Day of the Dead at St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery

Posted on 02. Nov, 2009 by [Teresa Tomassoni](#) in [Arts and Culture](#), [Classes](#), [International](#), [Thomas Lin](#), [Urban](#)



Mexican dancer performs at Day of the Dead

For seven years, nonprofit [Mano a Mano: Mexican Culture Without Borders](#) has organized [Day of the Dead](#) celebrations here in New York City.

According to the organization's Executive Director, Emily Socolov, the four days of festivities held in St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery graveyard this past weekend helped build community amongst Mexican immigrants and other city residents. "It's almost like a tent city," she said.

The authenticity of the event, featuring indigenous dance and music, helped connect immigrants to their country of origin by prompting remembrance of ancestors. Such a connection to one's deceased, Socolov explained, is healthy psychologically.

But in addition to meeting one of the community's psychological needs, this year's festivities had a unique goal of trying to spark economic growth during recession times, said Socolov. Artisans selling homemade ornaments traditionally associated with the holiday like *calaveras*, or sugar skulls, and families selling *pambazos*, a Mexican sloppy joe-like sandwich, were set up as part of the festival's marketplace with the hopes of reaping a little financial profit from the holiday's activities.



Murdered women of Juarez, Mexico are remembered at the Day of the Dead altar

Like every year, Mano a Mano also used Day of the Dead celebrations as a platform to bring awareness to and discuss social justice issues like child mortality due to gun violence and the [unsolved murders of young women in Juarez, Mexico](#).

To learn more about Day of the Dead from other volunteers and organizers of this year's event listen here:

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