



## Young Hispanic population booming on Staten Island

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STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- The young children are busy learning the alphabet and reading colorful books as they chow down on some pizza and drink their juice boxes.

It's a busy day at the Los Promotores program at PS 20 in Port Richmond where many young Hispanic children and their mothers are participating in a tutoring and literacy program designed to help immigrant families learn English.

Claudia Galinda, 27, and her two young daughters, Katherine Salas, 3, and Berelyn

Salas, 6, are from Mexico, and are part of the program to help improve their language skills.

This chart reflects data for 2013. (Courtesy/Brookings Institute)

"You can tell there's a lot more Hispanic people here now from all the stores and the people in the class," Ms. Galinda said through an interpreter. "It's been more since I came here."

Ms. Galinda and her children represent Staten Island's new demographics that show the rising number of young Hispanics on the borough.

### TREND 'NOT SURPRISING'

On Staten Island, more than one-quarter of the children from newborns to 4 years old are Hispanic -- that's about 27 percent, according to data contained in a new book from the **Brookings Institute** called **"Diversity Explosion: How New Racial Demographics Are Remaking America"** by William Frey.

The next age group isn't far behind.

From ages 5 to 19, 24.3 percent is Hispanic, and for ages 20 to 34, it's 22.1 percent, according the findings.

Overall, 17.9 percent of Staten Island's population in 2013 was identified as Hispanic.

This chart shows the break down of the Hispanic population. (Brookings)

"It doesn't surprise me because we've suspected that the Hispanic population has

been rising in the borough," said Dr. Jonathan Peters, a CSI professor who runs the Large Scale Data Analytics Program. "There are strong indicators those numbers could be higher."

Frey's research was based on 2013 Census data that put Staten Island's population at 472,621.

The Hispanic population for the same year was reported to be 84,441. According to those statistics, Puerto Ricans comprised 8.2 percent, almost double the size of Mexican population at 4.3.

## **UNDERREPORTED POPULATION**

Dr. Peters and other experts believe those numbers could be underreported when factoring in children born to undocumented parents, and the Mexican population is presumed to be higher than the official Census data shows.

While exact figures are difficult to calculate, it remains that the borough has a growing foreign-born population and leading that trend are Hispanics.

**On the Island, nearly 21 percent -- or 100,500 -- are foreign-born**, said Dr. Joseph Salvo, who directs the Population Division at the city Department of Planning.

## **INCREASE IN FOREIGN-BORN RESIDENTS**

That's a huge increase from 1970, when only 26,700 Islanders were from outside the country. And it's considerably larger than it was in 2000, when the number was at 72,700.

"I didn't realize how many Hispanics are here until I started working here," said Dulce Chuva, the director of programs and advocacy at El Centro del Immigrante in Port Richmond. "Most of the people we serve here are Mexican or Central American. I haven't seen many Puerto Ricans."

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Staten Island demographics by race. (Courtesy/Washington Post)

## **DECADE OF CHANGE**

From 2000 to 2010, there has been a 52 percent increase in the Hispanic population, a 12 percent increase in the black non-Hispanic population and a 40 percent rise in the Asian non-Hispanic population on the Island, according to figures from the U.S. Census.

For Hispanics living on the Island, Mexicans have seen the largest jump in population, with a 154 percent increase from 2000 to 2010. The Puerto Rican population on the Island rose by 22 percent. Dominicans saw a 105 percent increase and Central Americans a 50 percent boost.

## **SEEKING OPPORTUNITY**

Rosanna Rey, 41, and her 9-year-old daughter, Litzy Reis, are the only Dominicans in the Los Promotores

program, where Wagner College students serve as tutors for kids kindergarten through third grade.

Ms. Rey's daughter was born here and the family went back to the Dominican Republic before returning to the United States a little over a year ago. Ms. Rey was working as a secretary in a law office in her homeland, but moved here so her daughter could learn English and for better job opportunities for herself.

"I think more Dominicans are coming here," Ms. Rey said through an interpreter. "I think it's good to have a city with a lot of children because they are the future."

"I think those numbers (the young Hispanic population) are going to keep growing," said Desiree Arazi, the literacy program coordinator for Los Promotores. "There's more and more people, so I'm not surprised by those numbers."

## **ETHNIC SHIFTS ON THE SOUTH SHORE**

While mainly North Shore neighborhoods, like Port Richmond, are predominantly Hispanic, the South Shore has seen an influx of immigrants in the past eight to 10 years, Dr. Peters said.

Rossville was traditionally a heavily white community, but there's some data that shows Hispanics have made the area home.

The Woodrow/Rossville area has been home to predominantly residents of Italian heritage, but there is also a community of Irish ancestry (11.9 percent) and residents with Puerto Rican roots (6 percent), **according to neighborhoodscout.com**. Almost 15 percent of the area's population is foreign-born, the site reports.

## **THE CITYWIDE PICTURE**

Staten Island's statistics usually lag behind the rest of the city's Hispanic demographics, the professor said. The lack of affordable housing and reliable transportation make the borough difficult for immigrants to navigate, according to Dr. Peters.

The study found that 54.6 percent of the Bronx population is Hispanic, with ages newborns to 4 at more than 60 percent.

Brooklyn was second at 36 percent, and newborns to 4 was at 35.2 percent.

Queens was third with an overall Hispanic population at 26 percent, with 35.5 percent in the newborn to 4-year-old range.

Manhattan was fourth at 25.8 percent overall, and 33.2 percent for newborns to 4.

"Immigrants usually move to Queens and Brooklyn before moving to Staten Island," Dr. Peters said.

