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Our America

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Museum Reflection 3

El Museo Del Barrio is a museum for Puerto Ricans and all Latin Americans in the United States. Raphael Montanez Ortiz, an artist, and educator founded this museum along with a group of parents, teachers, artists, and activists from Puerto Rico after observing that major museums often disregarded Latino artists. In the 1960s a community in East Harlem came together to give students a place to see cultural differences. The museum serves as a community educational hub, welcoming all residents and effectively utilizing their resources. It is a unique location with a distinct personality that combines Latino culture, family, art, education, and entertainment.

When visiting El Museo Del Barrio the Tree of Life stood out to me. Erika Harrsch is the artist of the sculpture. The Tree of Life was made in remembrance of the Mesoamerican Ancient Civilizations' Cycles of Death and Rebirth and their spiritual conviction that ancestors reincarnate as trees. The tree displays pictograms, mural paintings, sculptures, and works of art from the Toltec, Olmec, Zapotec, and Aztec cultures. Which shows depictions of time, space, and the heavenly and terrestrial realms were combined into one. To me, the Tree stood out because of how beautiful it looks and how you could write about loved ones who passed on one of the pictographs. It caught my eye because it shows another way to remember your loved ones who are no longer here.

During the visit, I found the staff respectful of the museum. The staff working wore black suits spread out around the museum. They were respectful of all the displays around them and me. The team showed a sign of appreciation and wanting to be there. The people around the museum showed interest in the museum and a sense of wanting to learn something. People from the school were there for the same reason I was, to learn more about Latin American people. The individuals in the museum showed compassion seeing everything around them.

When coming to El Museo Del Barrio I learned a lot about Puerto Rican and Latin cultures. The museum was established as "an educational institution and a place of cultural pride and self-discovery for the founding Puerto Rican community". The community came together to help the museum be a place for kids to learn about their culture or just to learn something new. I enjoyed my time at the museum and learned a lot.