



Photo by Robert Benimoff

Niia Fabell, 6, meets stilt-walker Stephanie Sine during the grand opening of Gateway Center. On Saturday, September 19, children delighted in Target's Bullseye, Toys R Us Geoffrey the Giraffe, clowns and circus acts from Big Apple Circus, Bronx Zoo picture stations, live musical performances and entertainment stations.

## RELATED OPENS GATEWAY

### Shopping mall cost \$500 million

BY DANIEL BEEKMAN

On Thursday, September 17, designer suits flooded the south Bronx.

Deputy Mayor Robert Lieber joined The Related Companies' Stephen Ross and a hundred businesspeople at the Gateway Center on River Avenue to celebrate the completed \$500 million shopping mall.

Forbes lists Ross, who owns the Miami Dolphins, as the 78<sup>th</sup> richest individual in America. The million-square foot Gateway Center is 90 percent leased and 80 percent open. It boasts a Home Depot, a Best Buy, a Target, a Staples and more.

Ross described the celebration as "a testament to a great public-private collaboration" and thanked the Bloomberg administration for its

business-friendly attitude. Related had to persuade big-box tenants and Bronx leaders that the Gateway Center would succeed and benefit the neighborhood. There were naysayers and skeptics, Ross said.

In 2006, Related and a neighborhood coalition signed a community benefits agreement. The agreement, condemned by some as incomplete and weak, has resulted in 56,000 square feet leased to Bronx merchants, some 2,000 retail jobs and 2,900 construction jobs, Ross and Lieber said.

40 percent of Gateway Center construction contracts went to Bronx businesses and 15 percent went to minority and women-owned businesses. 67 percent of retail jobs

*Continued on page 4*

# Related celebrates Gateway Center opening

From page 1

went to Bronx residents.

"Every so often, we get it right," Ross said.

A Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation report failed to break down the retail jobs by community district; 25 percent of the jobs were supposed to go to residents of Community District 4 - Concourse Village and Highbridge.

The Gateway Center offers Bronx residents the retail opportunities that suburbanites take for granted, Ross added.

Jennifer Nieves, 24, of Southern Boulevard visited the Gateway Center on September 17. Nieves is a fan of the development. There are few big-box retailers convenient to the south Bronx, Nieves said.

Miguel Nieves, no relation, a Walton Avenue super, has lived in the neighborhood for three decades. The mall will empty when the baseball season ends and Yankees fans return



Photo by Victor Chu

Deputy Mayor Robert Lieber (second from right) joins business people and Bronx elected officials at the completion of the Gateway Center shopping mall on River Avenue.

to Westchester County, he said.

Nieves thinks the Gateway Center is an improvement; he remembers when the Bronx House of Detention sat on River Avenue. But Nieves sees problems. The mall parking lot is too expensive, he said. The neighborhood is more congested. People push shopping carts to cars parked in the neighborhood, and then

abandon the carts.

"You see a homeless with a brand new Home Depot cart," Nieves said.

Frank Rustianoe, 23, works at a scrap metal business. He thinks the mall will boost sales in the neighborhood. He sees young people walk to work at the Gateway Center.

"More people, more business," Rustianoe said. "Good for the delis and din-

ers."

On September 17, Lieber thanked former Deputy Mayor Dan Doctoroff, a friend and former business partner of Ross'. Doctoroff helped push produce merchants out of the "blighted" Bronx Terminal Market.

Assemblyman Michael Benjamin referred to the mall as "a piece of Bergen County, here in the Bronx."