

## Oh What a Feeling



Jose “Poncho” Muñoz is bursting with pride about being a dad. So much so, in fact, that he can sound like a brand new father. But he’s actually the dad to three girls, ranging in age from six to seventeen. In addition to taking part in the *10 Ways to be a Great Dad* ad campaign, the 36-year-old Bronx native wrote an op-ed this past Father’s Day for *El Diario La Prensa*. “My whole family read it,” Muñoz says about the article in which he proclaims his faith in fatherhood entitled *There’s No Better Feeling in the World*. “They loved it. My dad always picks up that paper. I didn’t mention it to him. When he saw it, he was like, ‘Whoaaaa!’”

“It’s the first time I wrote something,” Muñoz adds. “I feel like I’m a terrible writer.” But his humility stops there, especially when it comes to talking about his kids: he zealously reels off his daughters’ recent accomplishments, whether it’s his oldest daughter’s success at school or his 13-year-old’s sense of humor.

Muñoz, who owns an auto parts business in the Bronx, says he is confounded by other dads who don’t thrive on being fathers. “It puzzles me how they can let time go by and not jump in,” he says. “It’s never too late to make that leap. Those kids want you in their lives.”

Muñoz, who fondly recalls going to Yankee games with his own dad, is hoping he can have a hand in pushing dads to become more active. “I want to start something in the Bronx. One of the things I love to see—and I don’t know why-- is fathers pushing strollers,” he says. “With blacks and Puerto Ricans, I don’t see it enough. I want to see it, here in the Bronx: ‘Take your kid out for walk!’”



As he sees it, more involved fathers get more—not less—out of life, when they spend more time with their children. Just the other day, his youngest, Samantha, made that crystal clear. “You know what she called me?” Muñoz asks, sounding like he just won a million dollars. “She said, ‘Pappy, you’re my icon.’ I said, ‘Whoaaaa.’”



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I Request to Speak

### **There’s No Better Feeling in the World**

by Jose “Poncho” Muñoz

Tiffany, my twelve year old, was in the bathroom the other day singing Hector Lavoe’s 1969 version of *Hacha Y Machete* - a metaphor for strength. I cannot describe the feeling of pride when my daughters sing old songs with me, especially that song. We sing, we laugh, and we play jokes on each other. We love each other.

I was 24 when I had my first child. It was hard and I was scared. I really didn’t know what to do and I wasn’t sure about what the future held for me. But my desire to be a good dad prevented me from failing. For my daughters, I had to make something happen.

My parents are my best friends and I wanted to give my children the same love that my parents gave to me. I’ve also had other dads influence me on how to be a better dad, like some of my former teachers and older friends who were father figures to me. They all showed me how to take things piece by piece and mold this whole dad thing together.

I see many men failing as dads. I have friends who don’t see their kids at all, who make excuses. It’s not fair. Kids seek love from their fathers, no matter how long they’ve been gone. I participated in the City’s NYC DADS advertising campaign because I want to encourage other men to become better fathers. I want them to say, "Wow, it feels good to have my kids in my life." Or, "I'm getting those kids back into my life." There’s no better feeling in the world.

**JOSE “PONCHO” MUÑOZ**

Small business owner and Bronx resident.