

By Hertz Clyde Désir



Hope for Haitian American Youth and Elderly (HOHAYE) marked its biggest annual event and supporters came in great numbers to join in the celebration. The anniversary concert held at the Levi Center in Evanston brought HOHAYE to its eighth year of service.

Chauvette “Ti Bab” cast the first stone musically with two selections. In passing, he told two jokes linked to two separate silly gentlemen.

Traditionally the concert features Léon Dimanche who’s increasingly falling in love with the Chicago fans. He wasn’t alone. Of course, he was accompanied by gifted musicians from the area such as Pharis Mondésir on the guitar, Jimmy Joseph on the bass to mention only these two. Léon also shared the stage with Yvon Estinvil who brought with him his mariachi band.

In spite of some technical difficulties with the sound system both artists worked the crowd. The spectators did enjoy themselves. One woman sitting on the second row over to the left said the music was so good, it flowed through her blood. The audience even sang along with Yvon on his last selection, when suddenly there was a sound glitch that caused all the microphones to be off, including Yvon’s. The music went on, anyway.

Magalie Dieujuste and the girls performed beautifully in front of an audience that included individuals that came from several suburbs such as Romeoville, Gurnee and Kankakee.

Amid all the performances, HOHAYE’s president Pastor Franco Valdémár played a video that highlighted the organization’s activities in Haiti among school children, church leaders and

individuals who can't afford the cost of medical care. The video showed pictures from what a mobile clinic looked like to school children sponsored by the organization and different seminars for a number of Haitian pastors.

In his remarks on the occasion, Consul Lesly Condé lauded Pastor Franco's commitment and urged the audience to keep supporting the ministry.

"Pastor Franco's ministry is having good results," Mr. Condé said. "Thanks to our support, Pastor Franco empowers [Haitian] youths to discover how valued they are ... they will be able to help themselves, as well."

Prior to the celebration, HOHAYE's volunteers were working behind the scene in many respects. Some were handling logistical matters; others were busy inviting people and selling tickets. Céliane Obruch sold approximately 50 tickets, according to Pastor Franco. "Beside God, sister Céliane is the engine of success of the celebration," he added. Mrs. Obruch's outstanding efforts reflect the efforts of other members of the organization.

By the same token, Pastor Franco publicly acknowledged Daniel Jean, Yvon Estinvil, Pharis Mondésir, Antonine Lainé and Max Delsoin. They were honored respectively as HOHAYE's person of the year, HOHAYE's volunteer of the year, HOHAYE's master of the year and the latter two were recognized as Southside and North side branches persons of the year.

Overall, Pastor Franco was pleased about the June 6 event that gathered more than 300 attendees. "God is really good.... it could not be any better. The turn out breaks all our record even last year," he said via e-mail.

"The glory belongs to God alone. We are going to work harder."
