

Heroes for Haiti benefit aids three charities

Monday, February 22, 2010

By **Dave Canfield**
The Record

ALBANY — Carline Murphy founded the Haitian Community Development Project in 2003 to support a number of projects to benefit her native country. In the wake of last month's catastrophic earthquake, the need for that support has increased exponentially and bred a creative collaboration in the works.

With the help of solar power company Solaqua, the Columbia County resident is raising money to send a box of needed supplies to the devastated island nation — but not just any box. Equipped with solar panels on its top, the box is essentially a “solar center,” said Solaqua president Jody Rael.

“It can pump water, it can charge cell phones, give light,” he said, among other uses as a power source.

In addition to things like solar-powered ovens Rael's company produces, the items it will hold on its voyage — including camping supplies like tents and sleeping bags — will find great use as well, Murphy said.

“People are practically camping in Haiti right now,” said Murphy, who is trying to raise enough money to ship the box.

Her projects were among three beneficiaries of an Albany Heroes for Haiti benefit held Sunday at the Washington Avenue Armory in Albany, along with Catholic Charities and Yele Haiti, the non-profit of Haitian-born singer Wyclef Jean. Donations were collected at the door, items were raffled off and clothing donations accepted.

Fidel Moreno, who produced the event featuring music from a number of local acts, said he had been in talks with a Haitian friend in the Port-au-Prince band Boukman Exsperyans — “the Bob Marley of Haiti,” he called them — in hopes of getting the band to perform.

“We couldn't get all the members up from Haiti,” he said. “That's how bad it is right now.”



Moreno met some of the organizers, mostly from local non-profits, at a recent workshop.

Jacqui Williams, one of the organizers who heads the non-profit Filling in the Gaps in American History, said if enough funds were raised, they hope to start a transition fund to help recent Haitian refugees in the area.

She said Sunday's event was a good way to mark Black History Month and inform local citizens of African descent about the history of Haiti.

While the event was a time for charitable networking for some, it was more personal to others.

Murphy's daughter Marie Jamie was in Haiti delivering water filters at the time of the quake and was initially unaccounted before she got in touch with her mother, who was relieved to learn she was safe. Several other relatives were also affected.

In addition to the solar project, her non-profit has several others in the works. High on the list for Murphy is getting a British-made incinerator to Haiti to combat a waste management problem that she said affects the quality of life of millions by contaminating drinking water, among other problems.

She's currently raising the funds necessary to get that incinerator there.

"Even before the earthquake, that was our plan," she said. "With this quake, the problems have magnified."

Dave Canfield can be reached at 270-1290 or by e-mail at dcanfield@troyrecord.com.

URL: <http://www.troyrecord.com/articles/2010/02/22/news/doc4b8207aae7c25792183615.prt>

© 2010 troyrecord.com, a [Journal Register](#) Property