

Highlights of January 19, 2009 Dorchester Town Hall Meeting

Issues in the Haitian Community:

- Lack of leadership & advocacy in the Haitian-American community;
- Lack of the Haitian community's access to educational, health care, information and other helpful resources;
- Government to send high profile personnel to meet and speak with Haitian-American community leaders;
- **Education:**
 - No Child Left Behind to materialize in the Haitian-American community-
 - Many Haitian American students are being "left behind."
 - This new generation of Haitian students are left out of the Educational establishment.
 - Haitian students are not prepared for college.
 - They do not know the basics.
 - Family, educators, students and community are disconnected.
 - Higher institutions need to be more involved with the Haitian community.

How do we get the Haitian Media and the churches involved?

Assistance requested in Recognition for our Contributions: i.e. Battle of Savannah, New Orleans's culture, Jean Baptiste Pointe DuSable- founder of Chicago

- Help Haitian communities obtain resources for community and youth development;
- Hire Haitian-American organizers and outreach workers in large Haitian populated states;
- **Foreign Policy:**
 - Eliminate Haiti's foreign debt
 - Facilitate Haitian-American organizations to obtain USAID assistance to develop projects in Haiti

- Haitian- Americans to obtain college credits to do service projects in Haiti
- USAID – Foreign Aid funds don't often go to the people that need the help. Most of the funds go to administrative costs;

Send someone to assess this precarious Haitian-American community of Boston. The attitude "No one is prophet in their own land" resonates. The twelve of us who met expressed helplessness in solving the observable crisis. It was uttered it seems that no one cares about Haitians.

Conclusion:

How does one keep that momentum?
How do you get more people involved?
What's next?

Town Hall Meeting convened by Nekita Lamour
Notes compiled by Liz and Nekita Lamour

An interfaith service at a UU church and a Town meeting also occurred the same day in Malden, Massachusetts. Except that the Malden Town Meeting with an attendance of 55 had more young people, the issues were similar to those addressed in Dorchester. A summary of the Malden meeting was published in the local paper. The youth wanted youth centers, parent trainings, leadership skills for all youths whether they are Haitian or not. We wish some of the stimulus package money would go to outreach workers and more community centers in urban and sub/urban communities with significant ethnic population, not only Haitians.

Meeting announcement was posted in a usadayofservice page. An Op-ed column was also published in the local paper. We never got any feedback from any entity.

I organized three meetings in one day as part of the Dr. Martin Luther King Service Day called by President Obama on his inauguration.

N. Lamour- January 2009