

Keeping our culture alive in New York City

By **RÉGINE M. ROUMAIN**
SPECIAL TO THE
REPORTER

From Tabou Combo to La Troupe Makandal, from Franketienne to Edwidge Danticat, ours is a culture of struggle and celebration, of political independence and cultural expression unlike any other in the Caribbean. I've known this from the time I was very young. I can still remember the sound of adult voices echoing in Brooklyn living rooms, as my parents and their friends engaged in passionate debates about Haiti's future. I still remember that feeling of belonging, months after my family moved back to Haiti, as my friends and I enjoyed fresco and papita under the kenep tree of our middle school playground.

Now, as a mother myself, I dream of keeping Haiti's vital culture alive for my two young daughters, and for all of Haiti's thriving diaspora, young and old. From that dream, Haiti Cultural Exchange was born.

Haiti Cultural Exchange is a nonprofit organization founded in June 2009, based in Brooklyn, NY, to provide a space for Haitian culture to thrive. Our mission is to present and promote the cul-

tural expressions of the Haitian people in ways that are accessible for all Haitians and friends of Haiti. We offer innovative programs including art exhibits, performances, and public forums. Our vision is to create a permanent space in NY for this exploration – a dynamic community arts/cultural center where we can support emerging artists, provide programs for children and youth, serve as a resource through an archive and library, establish a gift shop, and hold performances and exhibits. This communal space, which will be the first cultural center in New York of its kind, will be a place for the community to come and engage with our culture, discuss social issues of relevance, break down barriers, celebrate what is positive, and create a space for dialogue.

Our belief in culture as a catalyst for change is steadfast. In the short time since HCX was launched, we've hosted over 300 children, including survivors of the earthquake, in art-making workshops and as part of our Ti Atis workshop series. We've collaborated with a number of prominent cultural institutions to bring Haitian visual

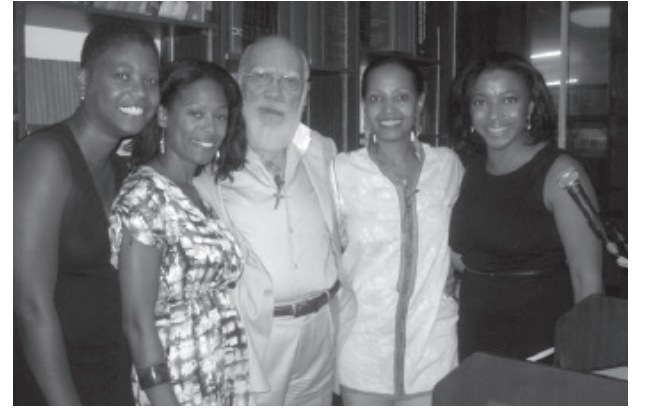
and performing artists to their audiences, and organized events featuring established and emerging artists; from poet Michele Marcelin to writer Ibi Zoboi and Haitian jazz saxophonist Buyu Ambroise. And there is much, much more to come! If you are in NY, I encourage you to join us for this cultural exploration and experience! We are currently planning a Haiti Film Fest November 18 – 20. Films will explore the complexities of Haitian society and culture. This international festival will include filmmakers from Haiti, the U.S., Canada and Europe.

I have always believed that Haitians should play an active, leading role in our own development – both here in the diaspora and in Haiti. Though outside support is critical for Haiti's future, we must be present to shape the dialogue, provide leadership, develop our own models for development and growth, and reclaim our culture. It is up to us to define what we need, who we are, what our culture is, and what our future should be. And now more than ever, it is essential for us to tell the story of our culture, our people, our creativity, and our assets, and chart

a new course for positive social change. We can and should!

It is very important to us to build bridges and form strong connections with Haitian artists and cultural organizations in Haiti. To that end, we are organizing a meeting in Haiti on November 28th at the Parc Historique de La Canne a Sucre to explore possible collaborations.

We know that Haiti is teeming with creativity – celebrating our African ancestry in all forms, from metal sculpture to Rara bands. Likewise, Haitians and Haitian-Americans contribute to the social, political and artistic landscape of New York and of the world, innovating and



(Left to Right) Haiti Cultural Exchange Board members: Marcelle Bichotte, Régine M. Roumain, Franketienne, Marilyn Andre and Marie Joseph.

inspiring those around us with Haiti as our touchstone, our creative lens. We have carried this spirit with us to our communities in the United States and across the globe, and through organizations like Haiti Cultural Exchange; we

hope to keep that spirit vibrantly alive for future generations.

Régine M. Roumain is the executive director of Haiti Cultural Exchange. For more information about Haiti Cultural Exchange visit: haiticulturalx.org

Miami pioneers Haitian news on network TV

This spring, NBC's local Miami affiliate launched the first network news segment dedicated solely to the Haitian community. Christalie Parisot, daughter of longtime Haitian radio and television personality Elizabeth Guerin, is the first Haitian to host a news show on NBC.

The half-hour show, which airs every weekday at 10p.m., broadcasts news from Haiti as well as local news from South Florida. The production of this pioneering show is "a result of the hard work" says Elizabeth Guerin. It has enjoyed the support of major sponsors from the onset.

"We were lucky to start this type of news show in Miami, home to the largest population of Haitians living in the US," said Guerin. "There's enough news [from the Haitian community] to share every night."

The news segment re-airs at 4:30a.m. "for the folks in the community who are up early, like the nursing assistants, hotel workers and taxi drivers," says Guerin. She hopes to expand the news program nationally, but says that depends on the success of the show and the support it continues to garner from the community. "We remain humble because we know that ratings are important. We're very proud, but maintaining the news show with strong ratings is the key to expand in other markets like New York and Boston." -REPORTER STAFF

po ki
ansante
vini
nan tout
koulè

Vaneeta Sheth, MD | Jennifer Lin, MD | Deborah Scott, MD

Nan Brigham and Women's Hospital, ak pwogram Dematoloji Milti-Kiltirèl la, nou konprann bezwen inik pou po milti-kiltirèl. Komite dematolojis sètifye nou yo espesyalize nan po avèk zong moun ki pa blan epi yo konprann kòman kalite po espesifik reyaji yon fason diferan a tretman medikal ak kosmetik.

Eksperyans nou nan tretman po milti-kiltirèl ede nou bay yon swen pèsonalize ki modèn – tankou teknik chimik pou amelyore aparans po ak tretman reyon – pou adrese bezwen inik chak pasyan. **Nou kwè po tout koulè dwe ansante mezi li posib tou.**

Tanpri rele nou nan 617.732.9300 pou plis enfòmasyon an Anglè oswa pou pwograme yon konsiltasyon.



BRIGHAM AND
WOMEN'S HOSPITAL

A FOUNDING MEMBER OF PARTNERS
HEALTH CARE

SE MWEN KI KONTWOLE MALADI
OPRESYON MWEN.
SE PA LI KI KONTWOLE M.



BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER
HealthNet Plan
Get more.™

ChooseBMCHP.com

OU GEN POSIBILITE POU
OU RESPIRE ALÈZ

Gras a Pwogram Jesyon Swen
BMC HealthNet Plan lan.

Kontakte BMC HealthNet Plan nan 800-792-4355 oswa sou Entènèt. Pou' w kapab okouran tout opsyon ou genyen nan MassHealth, rele 800-841-2900, Lendi a Vandredi, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. (TTY: 800-497-4648). Pou' w kapab okouran tout opsyon ou genyen pou plan nan Commonwealth Care, vizite mahealthconnector.org oubyen rele 877-623-6765 (TTY: 877-623-7773), Lendi a Vandredi, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.