

PRESS RELEASE

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Haitian Heritage Month Kick-Off Event Starts Month-Long Celebration

Opening Ceremony To Take Place At Gilou Restaurant In West Palm Beach

The planning committee of the Palm Beach County Haitian Heritage Month celebration announces the **kick-off event that will take place at Gilou Restaurant Sunday, May 1st, 2011**. It will be followed by a number of cultural and academic activities at different dates and locations throughout the County.

Haitian Heritage Month Commemoration recognizes the valuable contributions made by Haitians to the history of the United States and the world. It is a celebration of Haitian history and culture and an opportunity to share this culture with the world community. **On May 18, a Haitian flag-raising ceremony will take place at Boynton Beach City Hall and at the Belle Glade City Hall.**

Other Haitian Heritage Month highlights include : an art exhibit at the Clay, Glass, Metal and Stone Gallery in Lake Worth; several cultural and educational events at various Palm Beach County Library branches; a traditional student essay contest; sports events; an art exhibit featuring Haitians in Palm Beach County at the Palm Beach International Airport; a day-long cultural festival in Belle Glade; a National Haitian American Forum at Barton Elementary School; an art exhibit from the children of Jacmel "Ayiti Cheri" created out of the rubble of last year's earthquake; and much more. Visit <http://www.palmbeachschools.org/pao/creole/MwaEritajAyisyen2010.asp> for more details.

Haitian and Haitian American students represent the largest ethnic minority group from a single country in the School District of Palm Beach County with more than 14,000 students. According to community activists, Palm Beach County is home to more than 90,000 Haitians.

Admission to all Haitian Heritage Month events is free and open to the public. A calendar of activities is attached.

Advisory Board members supporting the celebration of this year's Haitian Heritage Month in Palm Beach County include: Mrs. Marcia Andrews, PBC School Board Member; Mackenson Bernard, D-FL, 84th District Representative; Richard Champagne, Pres. Haitian Lawyers Association; Father Roland Desormeaux, Our Lady Of Perpetual Help Church; C. B. Hanif, PBC Muslim Community; Jacques Lafontant, Pres. Haitian American Democratic Club; Sophia Lafontant, OXFAM; Woodie McDuffie, Mayor of the City of Delray Beach; Immacula Michel M.D. - Support the Children and Families; Veronique F. Pluiose - Red Cross America; Rene Varela - Mayor of the City of Lake Worth; Jose Rodriguez, Mayor of the City of Boynton Beach; Maria L. Sachs, D-FL, 30th District Senator; Rabbi Barry Silver, Temple L'Dor Va Dor.

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