

CELEBRATING WHAT IS POSITIVE IN CITE SOLEIL

THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF KONBIT SOLEY LEVE

Dear all,

I would like to take a moment to thank you for your contribution to realizing the dream I had of honoring those who are working for peace and change in Cite Soleil. Thanks to our support and the support of other friends of Soley Leve, on June 25th, 2014, the first Prim Soley Leve was given to four young emerging leaders in Cite Soleil, and an entire evening was dedicated to celebrating all that is positive about Cite Soleil.

At 5:00 pm on Wednesday, representatives of peace-oriented organizations such as Lakou Lape and MINUSTAH, representatives of the press and the private sector, acquaintances from across Port au Prince, friends from our sister ghettos of Martissant and Belaire, and hundreds of residents from Cite Soleil gathered in Place Fierté to get to know one another and exchange ideas and experiences on social change. At 6:00 pm, they assembled in front of a stage to observe the inaugural Prim Soley Leve ceremony, that was intended to recognize and honor residents of Cite Soleil who were emerging as leaders and had contributed significantly to building peace and social change in 2014. Afterwards, a concert was launched that celebrated all of the talent that is hidden in Cite Soleil -. the desire of these young people for the chance to show who they are and what they have to offer was so clear.

The following is a description of the ceremony and celebration as a way to thank you for your contribution to making this possible.

Sincerely,

Louino Robillard, MA



1. THE SET-UP:

The stage had been installed on the 24th, so the night before the event there was a movie screening of 'We Love You Anne' where several hundred people came out to enjoy the film being projected onto the stage. Volunteers spent the morning of the 25th cleaning up the park and preparing the grounds for the event.



2. THE 'FWA MOUN':

The idea came from the annual La Difference Agro-Artisanal Foire (which will be hosted the following weekend), but that instead of showcasing products, we should showcase people who were working for change, and so the idea of the 'Fwa Moun' was born. From 4:00-6:00, hundreds of representatives from local organizations, community members, and friends of Soley Leve gathered in Place Fierte to exchange ideas and experience.



3. LAUNCHING OF THE CEREMONY BY A LOCAL HANDICAPPED PERSONS' ASSOCIATION

The event was officially launched by APHAP (Association des Personnes Handicappes Progressiste), an association that unites the handicapped community in Cite Soleil, led by Ronald Joseph. A young man from Cite Soleil who is blind launched the event with a short skit and to great applause, and Ronald Joseph gave a speech about the role of the handicapped community in Cite Soleil.



4. AWARDING THE PRIM SOLEY LEVE

Hundreds of residents of Cite Soleil and friends from outside gathered for the ceremony to award four young leaders with the first annual Cite Soleil Peace Prize, the Prim Soley Leve. The next four pages give an overview of the award ceremony, those giving the awards, and the recipients.



SADRACK JOSEPH



The first award was given by Daniel Tillias, the founder and president of Pax Christi Ayiti and SAKALA, who is himself a respected leader in the field of sports-for-peace in Cite Soleil. Mr. Tillias presented the first Prim Soley Leve to Sadrack Joseph, who is the president of ID-Haiti and the founder of the Cite Soleil Basketball Team. Mr. Tillias emphasized the power of sports for building tolerance, understanding, and peace. He also congratulated Mr. Joseph on choosing such a hard road at such a young age, and encouraged him to keep going.



Mr. Joseph accepted the award and said that the prize was a motivation to stay on his path, and though this is a difficult path, it is an important one. He also thanked the coaches, players, and other administrators of the Cite Soleil Basketball Team for making this initiative successful.



FRANTZ FRANCOIS



The second award was given by Michel 'Son' Wilgempson, one of the founders of La Difference and a spokesperson for community empowerment in Cite Soleil. The award went to Frantz Francois, a core member of SAKALA, which is a community center dedicated to the prevention of youth violence through sports, education, culture, and urban agriculture. Frantz was also a key member of the Touris Ghetto Initiative, facilitating solidarity visits between residents of Cite Soleil, Martissant, and Belaire. Giving the award, Mr. Wilgempson cited the names of leaders in Cite Soleil and said that Frantz was going to have to



replace them one day, and that the responsibility for accepting this award was heavy. He said that he had great faith in Mr. Francois and that he is one of the hardest working people in Cite Soleil.

Mr. Francois accepted the award and said two simple things: the first that the peace we are searching for is something we have to build together, in the spirit of *konbit*. He also said that in 2005-2006, gangsters were growing like weeds in Cite Soleil, but that in 2014, social leaders would be as numerous as sand on a beach. He thanked the leaders of Daniel Tillias and Garry Laurent of SAKALA who had guided him and served as mentors to him.



ALASHKAR MILIEN



The third award was presented by Gueldy Rene, a socially-engaged musician, a peace activist, and a founding member of Konbit Soley Leve. He presented the award to Alashkar Milien, a current leader in the Konbit Soley Leve movement, as a way of passing down the honor and responsibility from one generation of leaders to the next. He congratulated her leadership in a movement that has no structure and is challenging to understand, and thanked her for sustaining the movement when virtually all of the founding members had become discouraged.



Ms. Milien said she accepted the award on behalf of everyone who was working for social change in Cite Soleil, and that this award was like a gas to light the fire of change.



STEPHEN ITALIEN



The final award was presented by Louino Robillard, one of the founding members of Konbit Soley Leve. It was presented to Stephen Italien, one of the founding members of La Difference. Mr. Robillard congratulated Mr. Italien not only for his vision in founding La Difference in 2006, but for having the vision of changing all of Cite Soleil. He cited that despite Mr. Italien's young age, he has created a model that all of Cite Soleil can follow, and that even the Soley Leve movement itself owes its existence to the inspiration from La Difference.

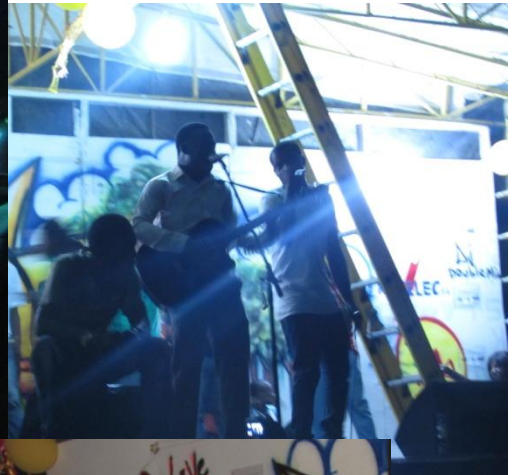


Mr. Italien accepted the award on behalf of everyone in La Difference, and said that his pride today came from the fact that it was not outsiders awarding him a prize, but his brothers and sisters from Cite Soleil. He thanked his neighbors and friends for their hard work in maintaining La Difference as a model community, and invited everyone to the Agro-Artisanal Fair that La Difference would be hosting this upcoming weekend.



5. A CELEBRATION OF THE TALENT OF CITE SOLEIL

From about 7:00 pm until 1:00 am, the stage was lit up with the talented young people of Cite Soleil. The evening's highlights included folkloric dance, guitarists, hip-hop artists, comedians, break-dancers, poets, DJs, racine bands and rara, and more. There was so much talent that after 6 hours, there was still not enough time for all of the artists who wanted to perform! Approximately 10,000 Soleyans from every corner of Cite Soleil attended the celebration of positivity in Cite Soleil.



THANK YOU !



MESI !