



Press Release

Event: Voices of the Haitian and Dominican Diasporas in the United States

Date & Time: May 3rd, 2008, starting at 12:30 p.m.

Location: Hammer Health Sciences Center (701 168th St., corner of Ft. Washington), Rm. 401

Directions: Train #1, A, C or buses M04, M07, M05 to 168th street walk on block east to Fort Washington

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“Voices of the Haitian and Dominican Diaspora in the United States” is an open forum organized by Columbia University students of Haitian and Dominican descent who are dedicated to the cause of remedying the human rights situation facing Haitian immigrants and their descendants in the Dominican Republic. The persistence of the violations of Haitians-Dominicans’ rights in the Dominican Republic, as well as the Dominican and Haitian governments’ refusal to address these violations are the main driving forces behind the creation of this Forum. Our goal is to provide a space for dialogue at all levels within both, the Columbia and the Diaspora communities, as well as devising plans of action among students, community members, professionals, scholars, and allies concerned with issues pertaining to human rights and Haitian-Dominican affairs.

Currently New York City serves as the home to growing Dominican and Haitian populations, which have a powerful voice that resonates on the island. This open forum, sponsored by the Kraft Family Fund, will provide not only the space, but also the information and connections necessary to enact change, bringing together some key local and international figures, such as Sonya Pierre, founder of MUDHA, Edward Paulino, Ph D. Assistant Professor at John Jay College-CUNY, as well as Haitian producer of Birthright Crisis, Miriam Neptune and Puerto Rican producer of Perejil, Irene Rial-Bou.

This event is part of a larger goal executed by Columbia students of Haitian Students Association and Grupo Quisqueyano, which can be summarized in two main points:

1. We believe that it is essential to reach a mutual and clear understanding of the island historical perspective as an island/two nations, followed by an update of the current socioeconomic and political situations maintaining both nations torn and in misery;

2. Sketch a proactive plan and transform it into a concrete instrument that would temper the discord between Dominicans and Haitians and open the lines of communication between the communities, both in the States and on the island.

Following our open forum, we will be hosting a reception with refreshments and entertainment by Kalunga Neg Maron, a Konpa group and other groups at the Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Educational and Memorial Center (3940 Broadway at 165th Street). For inquiries and more information, please contact Rosemary Almonte or Alba Mota.