

Spirit of Hope Gala Embraces Sankofa -Return to the Past to Build for the Future

By Audrey J. Bernard, Editor-At-Large

When D.G. Wilson-Davis, executive director of Spirit of Hope, Cancer Survivors Making A Difference, was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1991, her first thought was "I don't have cancer, cancer has me." She rebuked it and is presently joyfully celebrating her sixteenth year in remission. Wilson-Davis became a beacon of hope for other victors - not victims - of the "Big C." In her endeavor to help others win their fight with the dreaded disease, she went on to find The Spirit of Hope organization, a unique cancer support service program uniting men and women diagnosed with cancer on the "Road To Recovery."

As survivors making a difference in Harlem, the organization exists under the umbrella of Cancer Support Services, Inc. that was founded by Jeff Berman in 1994 and continues to be the only non profit organization solely dedicated to improving the quality of life for cancer patients through exercise, nutritional counseling and stress reduction techniques. In the pursuit of making this a cancer free society, the consummate cancer survivor organization annually salutes Advocates of Hope in recognition of their self-empowerment techniques to become thriving cancer survivors.

This year's stellar Night of Hope benefit gala dinner dance took place at The Alhambra Ballroom

in Harlem and was attended by many local and national politicians, cancer survivors, community health care providers and civic leaders advocating comprehensive cancer care services. Stylish guests in black tie and African-inspired dress enjoyed a terrific evening filled with greatness and perceived by many to be a true testament to the organization's remarkable success.

Embraced by the Spirit of Sankofa - reflect upon our past and build for the future -- the event united all survivors as one in the battle against cancer and presented the new 2007 Spirit of Survivorship honorees: Dr. Henry G. Godfrey, associate director of surgery at North General Hospital and The Ralph Lauren Center for Cancer Care and Prevention (Spirit Of Hope Award); Most Worshipful Calvin Martin, past grandmaster, Prince Hall Masons, State of New York (Man Of Hope Award); Cynthia Holiday Moore, geographic marketing manager, Anheuser-Busch Companies (Woman Of Hope); and New York State Senator Bill Perkins, 30th Senate District (Sankofa Award).

The African-inspired evening which included a cocktail reception, award presentation, dinner and dancing was chaired by Dr. Dolores R. McCray, vice president/branch manager and new business development officer overseeing the Harlem branch

of Amalgamated Bank. Dr. McCray, who has earned and enjoys an extensive relationship with the Harlem Community through community outreach, offered her personal thanks to everyone who has supported the exceptional endeavor of The Spirit of Hope and those who extended a helping hand for this Night of Hope Benefit Gala. "I am pleased to serve as honorary chair of the 3rd annual Spirit of Hope Night of Hope benefit gala," she said. "Spirit of Hope is to be highly commended as an organization of cancer survivors who are making a difference in a significant way in our community."

The 2007 gala dinner dance benefit committee was chaired by Wilson-Davis who also served as a presenter of the awards along with Dr. McCray and Martin Hayott. "Tonight's honorees are Advocates of Hope who believe Cancer Care is a family affair and community responsibility," she said. "Their dedication and commitment to community is our blessing tonight." Wilson-Davis' esteemed committee members included Tanya Davis, Kim Jones, Wylene Nebblett, JoAnn Joy Riley and Hazel Rosetta Smith who also served as artistic director of the illustrious program and is, herself, a twelve year survivor. "All honor and glory to God," avowed Smith. "He is not through with me yet!"

KEVIN BYRD GARNERS INTERNATIONAL HEADLINES



18-60, all from different walks of life in a one-man, one night only show. Backed up by a five piece band, "Release" is a show that highlights the emotions and the struggles that men encounter on different angles, revealing a deep sense of exploration.

Written by Kevin Byrd and Jason Hendricks and produced by Marc Meir and Kevin Byrd, "Release" is designed to give the audience a look into the lives of six young men - for instance, Tony - a teenage boy who suffers from identity issues due to not knowing his father. Tommy, another featured character, is an extremely successful college graduate who deals with the challenges of pleasing his mother. These and the other stories portrayed in "Release" contribute to enlightenment of the thought process of young men and as a result, garners understanding and appreciation for them.

Among a myriad of talents, Kevin Byrd is an actor, model, singer, dancer, producer and writer. Byrd starred as Lt. John R. Fox in the award nominated TV special, "Honor Deferred," produced by Al Roker and Samuel L. Jackson, which premiered on the History Channel. He also wrote, produced, and starred in the award winning film, "The Last Dayz," Featured in Vibe.com, King Magazine, and the Daily News. Byrd also starred as Cameron Johnson/Cover Model in the bestselling Novel, "Things in Between" by Nathaniel Portis.

Kevin Byrd has won the Cinema Golden Eagle Award and the Freddie Award for "Nicole's Choice, the Proclamation Award for "The Last Dayz," and was nominated for the NAMIC Vision Award for "Honor Deferred."

Award Winning Actor 26 Yr. Old Kevin Byrd Garners International Headlines for Prostate Cancer Awareness Campaign. Kevin Byrd has been active promoting awareness of Prostate Cancer since the age of 24 through speaking at public forums, distribution of literature and active promotion at his one show "Release".

Kevin Byrd recently starred in his own off-Broadway one-man show, "Release," in which he played six different men at six different phases of their lives. According to The Epoch Times New York Staff Denise Benson "Amidst the fame Byrd has still flown high, not only working to raise awareness about Prostate Cancer which has a significantly higher rate of occurrence among African Americans males, but also volunteering to help people with autism."

About "Release": For many young men, family, friends and self identity issues arise as early as junior high school. Even though some people do not identify with these problems, if you think you don't know someone displaying one of the following six dilemmas...think again. "Release" depicts the lives of 6 personalities, and the lives of 6 men in the age ranges from

Huge Turnout for Cancer Screenings



Dora Giraldo, Assoc. Radiographer, Elmhurst Hosp. Ctr., Sun J Park-Kim, Nurse Practitioner, Elmhurst Hosp. Ctr., Maribel Sumba, Asst. Dir. Radiology Dept. Elmhurst Hosp. Ctr., Assemblyman William Scarborough, NYS Committeewoman Joan Flowers, Esq., Dr. Rupert Thompson, Urologist, Winston Dyer, Founder & Exec. Dir. Arianna Prostate Cancer Community Outreach, Sheila McGann-Bivona, Assoc. Dir. Blood Donor Program, Elmhurst Hosp. Ctr.

Assemblyman William Scarborough and NYS Committeewoman Joan Flowers, Esq. hosted a Free Breast Cancer and Prostate Cancer Screening Health Fair at the Pathmark Shopping Center on Saturday, Oct. 13th. Scarborough said these two cancer screenings were held because both breast cancer and prostate cancer have the highest death rates among African American men and women due to the lack of early screenings resulting in late stage cancer diagnosis. With early detection, both of these cancers have low fatality rates. The Queens Health Network Mo-

bile Mammogram Unit and the Arianna Prostate Cancer Screening Van provided the free screenings. Due to the large turnout of women requesting mammograms, Scarborough announced there would be another Breast Cancer Screening, provided by the Queens Health Network in November. Each mammogram takes 25 minutes, which limited the number of women who could be screened. Pre-registration is a requirement. Women who would like a free mammogram at the November screening should call Scarboroughs' District Office at 718-723-5412.

Photos by Hubert Williams



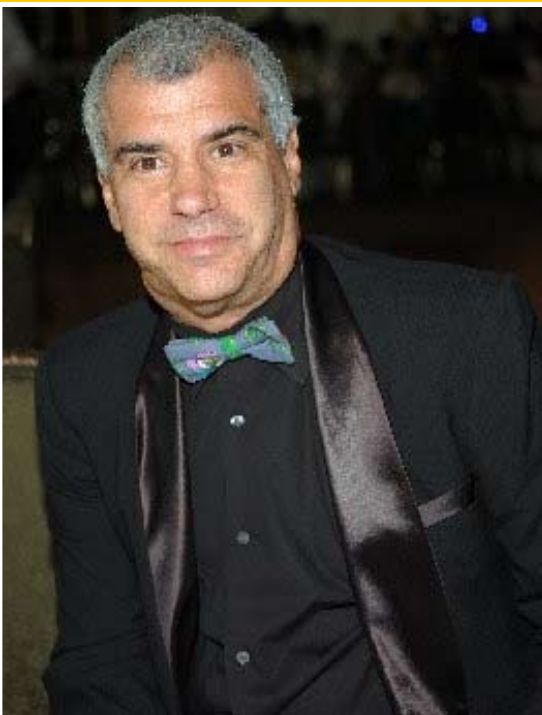
Spirit of Hope Award recipient Dr. Henry Godfrey



Survivors (top row) Danielle Doucette, Wilhelminia Grant, Hazel Rosetta Smith, LaVerne Williams, Gwenyth Chase (seated) Vannisha Taylor, Theresa Fisher, Angela Darling, Brenda Frost, Connie Jennings



Man of Hope Award recipient Calvin Martin



Jeff Berman, founder, Cancer Support Services

Photo by Juliet Kaye