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Local Haitian Family Mourning Loss of Many Family Members

Hopeful about relief efforts

The Black Voice News
REDLANDS

By Cheryl Brown

The devastating 7.0 earthquake that hit Haiti sent shockwaves around the world and poured in millions of dollars that has yet to get out of the bottleneck of bureaucracy. It has been a week since the devastation killed thousands and the recovery is still bringing out people alive but in need of help that too often is not there. Many hospitals, doctor, nurses and other first responders were buried in the rubble.

Haitian born Gary Thomas, a resident of the Inland area for 33 years and a US citizen, tells the story of losing his family members to the earthquake. Losing them is difficult he relays but them not having the last rites is something he said will be with the family for years to come.

It is a double hit. He said that his uncle, the man who raised him when his father left, didn't have a chance. The two story wood house fell and everybody got out

except the mother-in-law and a cousin. Unlike the reports it only took two hours for their rescue. One of the cousins, Jean Rene Delsoin lived on a hill and was not as affected came to rescue the family and took them to his house. It took him two days to travel 25 miles because of the condition of the roads. Thomas had just called another cousin, whose mother felt the shocks and died of a heart attack. His 1/2 sister lost her older brother, Dr. Tico, when the clinic he worked in collapsed, everyone including the doctors were killed. One cousin, Antonio Boicasis lives in the states with his daughter but went home to visit was hit by a car, had hip surgery and could not get out of the bed at home when the earthquake hit he too was lost.

Cousin Jean Rene rescued 20 people at his home but the food he has left has to be rationed. He said that the market it also rationing their food and that prices are very high.

"The Red Cross is good. They have been in Haiti for a long time they know who to get the help to," said Thomas. A devout Catholic, he said, "our culture dictates certain things," and when that is broken they have heartache and don't know what to do. He asked for donations to the Red Cross or Pomona First Baptist Church and prayers for people.

"It has been over a week and now more that ever the people of Haiti need our help. We must not turn a blind eye to the untold suffering just off our shores," said Congress Member Barbara Lee, in a resolution to be considered on the House Floor.



Local Haitian family standing strong in times of adversity: Alex St. Victor, Jean Saade, Aurellie St. Victor and Gary Thomas. Photo by Lynn Lee

UCR Study: No Child Left Behind Discourages Teachers

State's top teachers say law de-professionalizes teaching and stifles classroom creativity

The Black Voice News
RIVERSIDE

By Chris Levister

At its 2002 signing President George W. Bush memorably hailed the No Child Left Behind Act as a knock out blow for the "soft bigotry of low expectations". The landmark legislation had strong bipartisan support and was generally viewed as a necessary step to close the achievement gap between rich, poor, Black and White, and bring all students to grade level proficiency in math and reading by 2014.

Eight years later California's best teachers say the law is not making the grade, saying it de-professionalizes teaching and stifles classroom creativity.

The study "Does the No Child Left Behind Act Help or Hinder K-12 Education," released Tuesday, was conducted by UCR researchers Steven G. Brint, sociology professor and associate dean at UC Riverside and Patrick Guggino who earned his Ph.D in education from UCR in 2008. The researchers surveyed 740 national board certified teachers in California. National Board Certified Teachers are highly accomplished educators who meet high and rigorous standards.

They found that 84 percent of those polled see NCLB in an unfavorable light as too inflexible, too arbitrary and too punitive.

"That unfavorable view stems primarily from their perception that the legislation is not helping them reach students as individuals," said Brint.

He said the study indicates that teachers believe the act sets unrealistic goals, fails to use the skills and experiences of teachers and is not helping them teach creatively in ways that engage students.

Survey respondents reported that instruction time in their schools had been reduced in subjects such as science, music or art time for reading and mathematics – the two core subjects tested for No Child Left Behind.

Ironically, the law requires teachers to adhere to strict standards of professionalism, but teachers say that following a script mandated by the govern-

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Baca Leads Historic Hearing to Examine Federal Nutrition Policies

The Black Voice News
COLTON

The public was invited and the room at the Arrowhead Regional Medical Center was filled to capacity to hear Subcommittee Chair Congressman Joe Baca along with Congressmen Jim Costa and Jeff Fortenberry convene a 'field' hearing of the House Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition and Forestry. The focus of attention for the hearing was on food, nutrition, obesity and related health issues.

The hearing marked a historic moment – the first time a House Committee has ever held a Subcommittee hearing in California's 43rd Congressional District. The hearing examined the current state of California's participation in federal feeding programs, like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP – the new name for the Food Stamp program).

A particular focus was also placed on the issue of obesity,



Congressman Joe Baca (D-Rialto), center, speaks to an audience during an Agriculture Subcommittee hearing held at the Arrowhead Regional Medical Center in Colton along with Congressman Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE), right and Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno), left. Photos by John Coleman



Testimony during the hearing was panelled by G Valenzuela, MD, Webster Wong, MD, Administrators at the Arrowhead Regional Medical Center; Matthew Sharp, California Food Policy Advocate; Edie Jessup, Central California Regional, Obesity-Prevention Project; Mathew Marsom, Oakland Public Policy Institute; and Claudia Page, Oakland Center to Promote Health Access.

and its relation to poor participation rates in federal nutrition programs.

"Less than half of all eligible Californians are currently enrolled to receive SNAP benefits," said Rep. Baca. "This poor participation rate costs California nearly \$7 billion annually in lost economic activity! We must explore every avenue to promote public health and increase participation in these critical programs."

"Obesity related health spending has doubled in the past decade to reach a high of \$147

billion annually," continued Rep. Baca. "If nothing is done to change this trajectory, it is estimated obesity will cost our nation \$1 trillion by the year 2030. We must act decisively to stop this oncoming crisis and create healthier communities across our nation. Today's hearing was an excellent opportunity to hear from experts at the local, state, and national level on ways to increase participation rates for nutrition programs and to better educate the public on healthy lifestyles." Gwen Knotts, Knotts Family

Agency stated, "it was informative and interesting. To know how much revenue is lost for the lack of use of food stamps. It is important to find avenues to market them by using Black and Latino newspapers, faith-based community, linkages and getting the word out in regard to their availability."

Many African Americans felt that the only downside to the hearing was that there was no Black participation on the panel so all voices were not heard.

Cheryl Brown contributed to this article



Frank Reyes, Dr. Dev Gnanadev, Gwen Knotts and Francis Grice.



The audience listens intently to the panel discussion.