

ZAM's Hope 2007 Fundraising Dinner Report

By Shakenya Jackson

The individual's commitment to community provides a strong foundation for neighborhoods to grow on. That mantra is what organizations such as ZAM's Hope Community Resource Center in the West Roger's Park community rely on and in doing so, bring a beacon of light into the community.

ZAM's Hope celebrated its seventh anniversary helping the community with an annual benefit dinner and gift-giving party on Saturday, November 10th, in the 7300 block of Western Avenue. There, more than 200 guests were entertained with dances, songs as well as a fashion show displaying many of the ZAM's Hope's service- recipients' cultures and influences. Toys and winter coats were also distributed to the children in the program.

Many prominent speakers were featured during the program: including, Bernard Stone, Alderman of the 50th Ward; Bruce Rottner, police commander for the 24th District; Michelle Bibbs, director of Cultural Affairs; and Lily Hudson, assistant district manager, in the Department of Human Services. The speakers praised the mission of ZAM's Hope and encouraged its continuation. Beena Patel, representative of Dorothy Brown presented greetings and high praises from the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County.

The night was not only filled with guests of distinction, food, and entertainment but also offered a toast to ZAM's Hope's accomplishments for the year.

This not-for-profit community center serves seven cultural and ethnic backgrounds and offers such services as: an after-school program, a weekly grocery distribution, immigration services, computer classes, English tutoring classes, citizenship classes, rental assistance, and referral services.

Quadri attributes ZAM's Hope success to the service of its donors and volunteers, "Our organization has grown in strength because of [their] support."

ZAM's Hope has its roots in an Emergency Services program Quadri started in her home with the help of her two daughters utilizing her own financial resources. Her sojourn into selflessness began after she came to the United States and noticed a lack of services available to the immigrant families in Chicago more than 20 years ago. ZAM's Hope was incorporated in August of 2000.

The evening began with a social hour at 6:30 p.m., during which guests mingled and enjoyed hors'doeuvre. After a warm welcome from host Aisha Quadri, guests were treated to a rendering of the national anthem followed by a viewing of a documentary that illustrated the mission of ZAM's Hope and showed clients, kids, and volunteers participating in cultural activities.

The fashion show followed and featured Quadri and Bibbs working the runway to the strong Indian beats in the background.

"I thought some of the fashions in the fashion show were simply outstanding," said Valorie Mosby who traveled from the south side of Chicago to be at the event.

The Award of Excellence was presented to Lily Hudson for her generous support of ZAM's Hope and the community at large. Hudson invited a special guest, Edith, renowned story teller, better known as Mama Edie to enrapture the audience with a short fable extolling the virtues of optimism.

Professional singer, Asif Iqbal closed the evening with song and dance performances as patrons enjoyed the literal icing on the cake cut in honor of the end of the festivities.