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Town, County & State Partner with Residents & Local Business for Haiti Relief Efforts

Westbury, NY—As the magnitude of the devastation caused by the earthquake that recently rocked Haiti unfolds, Supervisor Jon Kaiman, along with North Hempstead's elected officials and state and county lawmakers joined with a Port Washington business and local Westbury residents last Friday to pledge contributions of clothes, food and a generous monetary donation to the stricken Caribbean island.

The gathering, which also included community leaders and officials from the school district who helped coordinate the effort, assembled inside the home of the Westbury Salvation Army Corp on Prospect Avenue in New Cassel—the staging area for the pallets of food and clothes destined for Haiti.

“The disaster in Haiti has compelled so many people to be part of the solution,” Supervisor Jon Kaiman said. “We’ve been blessed to have people from our community step forward.”

Port Washington entrepreneur, Richard Kim, the chief financial officer of Kiss Products Inc. and the company's employees stepped up real big, donating a check for \$10,000 to the Haiti relief effort.

The company's employees reacted to Haiti's plight by reaching into their pockets, Kim said. “Management matched their contributions,” he said, adding that he sought guidance from the Town about which charitable organization the donation should be directed to.

“This is an opportunity today for me to thank all Americans, a very compassionate people,” said Joseph Lubin, Captain of the Westbury Salvation Army Corp, after he was handed the \$10,000 check. “In the name of the Salvation Army and the people of Haiti, we thank you,” said Lubin a native of the ravaged Island nation.

While Haiti might be separated from America by oceans, State Assemblyman Charles Levine said, “we are joined together. “As we speak, the question is being simultaneously pondered on Pennsylvania Avenue and on Prospect Avenue: are we not our brother's and sister's keepers?”

Noting that Westbury, which encompasses a part of her council district, boasts a sizeable population of Haitians, Town Councilwoman Viviana Russell, praised “everyone in the community who came together to organize the relief drive. It's the least I could do to help all those who have been impacted by this disaster,” she said.

As well as Councilwoman Russell, County Legislator and former North Hempstead Town Councilman Robert Troiano was one of the key role players in organizing the effort.

“Beyond mountains there are mountains, but you never stop,” Troiano said, referring to a saying popular in Haiti. “We know that they will recover but they need help from us, all the citizens of the world.”

State Senator Craig Johnson thanked Legislator Troiano and all those who helped spearhead the initiative. “It’s been a very trying time for the people of Haiti and loved-ones here struggling emotionally not knowing the fate of relatives back home,” he said. “Thanks for organizing this outstanding effort.”

The Haiti Relief Fund, Inc., a local non-profit which provides humanitarian effort to Haiti, also was a recipient the relief effort thanks to a \$1,000 donation raised by Supervisor Kaiman.

“The people of Haiti need basic necessities right now and this will go a long way in meeting that need,” said Carlo Thertus, founder of the organization. “We have been getting amazing support and I thank everyone, the Salvation Army and the world.”

Yva Lubin, the wife of Captain Lubin, said, “As a Haitian, a woman and a mother, from my heart I thank you all for your compassion and generosity. You surely will be blessed in return.”

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