2011 - Andrew Young

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MLK Event a Huge Success

The 10th Annual Glastonbury Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration was a smashing success, drawing between 875 and 900 people to the GHS auditorium Monday night.

"It was a lovely, lovely event...It was a gift to all of us." said MLK Community Initiative volunteer Diane Lucas. "I thought it was a historic event and we were stopped by people and thanked for bringing Andrew Young to Glastonbury."

The event was highlighted by the presence of former US Ambassador to the United Nations Young, who stayed at GHS until 10:15pm signing books, even though the event was slated to end at 9:30pm.

"He is a remarkable man...many people were moved by him." said Lucas.

Young was introduced by Justice Flemming L. Norcott, Jr. of the Connecticut Supreme Court. Norcott observed that Young's life "is a testament to the dedication to public service and the fight for social justice for which Dr. King lived and died."

Norcott later added, "Author, statesman, civic leader, congressman, mayor, ambassador, American hero: Ambassador Young is indeed an inspirational upholder of Dr. King's dream."

The program also included a "Civil Rights" themed "movement based performance" by Dialogue Cycles Dance Group, a program of the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts. "Dialogue Cycles Dance Group was professional and profound in how they presented." said Lucas.

Lucas also praised the efforts of the GHS Madrigal Choir, which performed "Steal Away" led by Dr. Ethan Nash, as well as a "pre program drum call to gather" by Derick Danso, Julius Danso and Samuel M. Danso, Jr. In addition, the GHS Jazz Band performed during the event's reception, noted Lucas.

Lucas also heaped praise on the many community groups that contributed financially and those that provided in-kind donations. She emphasized the support of the Glastonbury Education Foundation was especially key, as Young's appearance was underwritten by the group.

Organizers were expecting around 1,000 people for the event and had even prepared the GHS library as an 'overflow' room in case the auditorium reached capacity. While the auditorium ended up being "standing room only" the overflow room was not needed.

"We didn't need to use the overflow room and I am very glad because I think it would have taken away from the experience-watching something on a screen is very different from being there in the auditorium." said Lucas.

So how does the MLK Community Initiative follow up this year's event? "I am really not sure how we do-but we will move one step in front of the next and continue the work." said Lucas. That work was slated to begin last night (Wednesday, January 19th) when the MLK Community Initiative met to begin planning for 2012.