

For Immediate Release



American Red Cross Rhode Island Chapter
Contact: Bruce Rutter
CEO
Office: 401-831-7700 ext. 105
Cell: 401-339-6320

French teachers and students hold concert to help with Haiti cholera epidemic

(Providence, RI – November 21, 2010) With its infrastructure in shambles, its healthcare system swamped, and hundreds of thousands of people living in tent communities, it was only a matter of time before an epidemic would strike beleaguered Haiti. Cholera, still contained to a few communities, reared its ugly head two weeks ago, and once again the plight of Haitians was back in the news.

The American Association of Teachers of French of Rhode Island (AATFRI) had been planning its annual concert with a French-speaking performer, and through a bit of serendipity, they discovered singer-songwriter-musician Marc Dorcéan, a native of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. “Since the devastation in Haiti, we have been looking to somehow support the Haitian people through our annual ‘Concert d’automne’,” said Michael Hébert, President of the AATFRI, “and when we heard about the cholera outbreak in Haiti, we all said ‘That’s it!’” Marc lives here in Rhode Island, but grew up in Haiti, and much of his work is rooted in the French and Creole musical traditions of Haiti—it’s a perfect match! Such an event will allow students of French in Rhode Island to explore French-speaking culture outside the classroom as well as help a very important international cause.”

Students and teachers have been working hard to promote the concert, which will be held this Friday morning at 10am at East Providence High School, located at 2000 Pawtucket Avenue in East Providence. Tickets for students are just \$5. Nearly 700 students and teachers of French will be participating.

“We’re going to give a significant portion of the concert proceeds to the American Red Cross Haiti Relief Fund.” Said Hébert, “We know they’ve done so much already to help the people of Haiti, and we trust them to use this money well.”

Bruce Rutter, CEO of Rhode Island Chapter of the American Red Cross reported that the Red Cross was working round the clock to treat cholera victims in the Arbonite valley, and had set up five cholera treatment centers in Port-au-Prince. With the disease poised to spread to the capital, prevention is the number one concern. “One of the really innovative things the Red Cross is doing down there is a massive texting program to get the word out to people about simple steps they can take to protect themselves. So many people are cut off from the usual forms of mass communication—like TV, radio and the internet—but still have working mobile phones. It’s surprising how quickly and inexpensively we can get the message out. If you reach just 50 thousand families with a text in these tent communities, and they tell their five nearest neighbors—who may be living five feet away—before you know, you’ve reached almost a million people!”