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Domestic Violence Awareness Brought to the Fore Through 'Dance for H.O.P.E.' Event

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Dance For HOPE VI initiative on Saturday, October 30, 2021 at the Beeston Hill Health and Wellness Center By. GIRLFRIENDISM H.O.P.E.

ST. CROIX — Girlfriendism H.O.P.E. — the nonprofit branch of the Girlfriendism Campaign which stands for Helping Ordinary People Everyday to be extraordinary through the arts and creative expression — hosted the second annual Dance For H.O.P.E. VI initiative on Saturday, October 30, at the Beeston Hill Health and Wellness Center. The event was held in honor of domestic violence awareness month.

Founded by members of the Simmonds Family, H.O.P.E. — a newly incorporated domestic nonprofit and the philanthropic arm of Girlfriendism — is led by Director and Founder of

Girlfriendism, Khnuma Simmonds.

"I was positively overwhelmed to witness the response of the community in support of our second annual #DanceForHOPEVI initiative," said Ms. Simmonds in a release issued early Monday. "Though we only offered 20 spaces due to Covid, there were upwards of 45 individuals — diverse in age, ethnicity and backgrounds — who arrived wearing purple to join H.O.P.E. in raising awareness on domestic violence through dance."

She added, "This turnout speaks volumes in regards to the community support that exists for survivors and the need for programming that promotes the arts — particularly music and dance — as an avenue for individual and collective healing.

"As a survivor and advocate, it was a joy to celebrate my birthday in community for a cause that continues to affect our community and to do so with intention — from specific music and movements to positive affirmations as a collective. Despite what we've all experienced directly or indirectly, each participant still found it within themselves to hold space for hope and healing for survivors and our community at large."

The initiative, which was live streamed via FaceBook from multiple pages including that of Beeston Hill Health and Wellness, has reached over 1k views collectively and continues to reach the community and raise awareness even beyond October, according to the release. October is the internationally designated month for domestic violence awareness. The Beeston Hill Health and Wellness Center provided the space and SoKh Caribbean Dance Fitness hosted the dance class.

H.O.P.E. [released a compilation video](#) capturing the experience including words of HOPE from #DanceForHOPEVI participants to survivors of domestic violence.

H.O.P.E. represents a group of innovative projects that are created to address individual and community trauma — particularly domestic and sexual violence — through the arts, according to the release. They have hosted a series of awareness events during the months of October and April including HOPE Talks — conversations with survivors of domestic and sexual violence on their journeys of hope and healing.

As part of the first annual Girlfriendism Retreat this past August, \$1,131 of seed money was raised to support the work of this organization and its efforts to secure fiscal sponsorship with a local fiduciary.

For more information on how you can get involved or to support the efforts of H.O.P.E., email girlfriendism@gmail.com or check out our website at www.girlfriendism.com/g-hope.