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Long Valley artists join benefit

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Group forms to sing in benefit for Haitian earthquake victims

By **PHIL GARBER, Managing Editor**

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WASHINGTON TWP. – A Haitian-American artist and musician will join with performers from around the area on Friday, Feb. 19, for a night of music to benefit the people of Haiti.

The concert will be from 8 to 10 p.m. at the Skylands Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 1811 State Route 57, Hackettstown. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation is \$12 and those under 12 are free. Light refreshments will be available by donation. All proceeds will be sent to Doctors Without Borders to benefit Haiti.

Performers will include Kate and Paul (Sobolewski), of Budd Lake; Jody Price of Long Valley; Mef (Gannon) and Angela (Adams), both of Long Valley; and Nadine (LaFond) and Brian (Herkert) of Montville and of the band Swampadelica.



Mef (Gannon), left, and Angela (Adams), both of Long Valley, are among the artists to perform in a benefit for Haiti on Friday, Feb. 19.

Haitian Stories

LaFond, born of Haitian parents, will share stories of working with children in Haiti and will be showing some of her artwork.

Her parents were born in Haiti while LaFond was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. The family returned to Haiti to visit relatives when LaFond was 2 and returned to the states three years later.

She returned to Haiti last August for the first time since she was a child. LaFond was exhibiting her artwork and performing in a benefit for Haitians when the earthquake struck.

"It means a great deal to me personally to witness the human solidarity around Haiti right now," LaFond said. "The world is only now starting to understand our heritage and history and how much the arts mean to Haiti as a whole; it's in the blood."

She said the Feb. 19 concert will be a way not only to raise money but to share a common support for the Haitian people.

"What I'm feeling most these days is gratitude, not only for all of the help that is being sent over but for the realization of interdependence that is so deeply awakening us all. It's a blessing," she said.

LaFond is a painter and mixed media artist and is a vocalist and songwriter performing as lead singer with the experimental roots band, Swampadelica and with husband and guitarist, Herkert.

The music is inspired by American and Caribbean roots music, blues, jazz, hip hop and classical influences.

She also is an art educator with Paul Robeson Galleries at Rutgers University.

Kate and Paul are popular musicians in the area, playing a blend of folk, country and rock.

Price, a guitarist, has been playing original solo folk-jazz for a decade in the style of Leo Kotke and Richard Thompson. He also is known in Long Valley for having twice run unsuccessfully for Township Committee.

Mef and Angela also are staples on the northwest Jersey music scene. Their music ranges from upbeat power pop/folk to ballads.

Previously, they sang with The Partners, a Beatles and blues inspired pop quintet that played venues such as the Sine Club in New York City, Morristown's Community Theatre and The Stanhope House.

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