



Garifuna Coalition Honored with a Union Square Award

Community leaders to be honored at upcoming ceremony

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<http://www.unionsquareawards.org/news>



New York – The Board of Directors of the Garifuna Coalition USA, Inc. a, nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit is proud to announce that it was honored at the Union Square Awards celebration on Friday, December 4th, as one of the five organizations to receive the prestigious Union Square Award and \$50,000 each for exceptional efforts addressing critical social and economic issues facing New Yorkers. The special ceremony was held at the historic Riverside Church in Manhattan.

The Union Square Awards has granted more than \$15 million to New York City organizations. “With minimal resources, these organizations make extraordinary contributions to local neighborhoods, and their work is vital to New York City. Given the current economic situation, the Award represents an important support to sustain these emerging organizations,” says Executive Director, Iris Morales.

“Becoming one of the recipients of such prestigious Award commits us to do even better, because that is what our beloved community deserves. We know Social Justice is not easy but is the right thing to do since it is our responsibility to make our City a better place, so that our children can proudly say: “New York City The Capital of Social Justice!” Said Rejil Solis, Chairman of the Board of the Garifuna Coalition USA, Inc.

“We represent a community that became known to the general population on March 25, 1990, as a result of the Happy Land Social fire, where most of the victims were of Garifuna descent. We have gone from being invisible to being honored with a Union Square Award,” said Jose Francisco Avila, Executive Director of the Garifuna Coalition USA, Inc.

Named after the park on 14th Street where New Yorkers have organized and spoken out about major social issues since the nineteenth century, the Union Square Awards was created to recognize and encourage initiative in serving New York City communities. The Awards realize an anonymous donor’s dream of honoring New Yorkers who take action to improve people’s lives and advocate for social change.

The Garifuna Coalition USA (GCU) serves as a resource, forum, advocate and united voice for the Garifuna immigrant community. New York City is home to the largest Garifuna population outside of Central America with an estimated 200,000 living in the South Bronx, Brownsville and East New York in Brooklyn, and Manhattan's Upper West Side.

It has successfully petitioned the Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. to proclaim March 11th through April 12th, 2010 as Garifuna Heritage Month to recognize the contributions of Garifuna Americans to the fabric of New York and pay tribute to the common culture and friendship bonds that connect the United States and Garifuna countries of origin. The proclamation will be presented on Thursday, March 11, 2010 at 11:00 AM during a press conference in the Rotunda of the Bronx County Building, 851 Grand Concourse at 161 St. Bronx, NY 10451. We invite all Garinagu and friends to join us at this historic event.

The Union Square Awards is a project of the Tides Center whose mission is to actively promote change toward a healthy society – one founded on principles of social justice, equal economic opportunity, a robust democratic process, and environmental sustainability.

GARIFUNA COALITION USA, INC.

