

MassCAHM.com - June 2007

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About MassCAHM

Caribbean American Heritage Month 2007 Celebrations in Massachusetts. MANY VOICES, ONE PURPOSE - Contributing to America's success as a nation.

Caribbean American Heritage Month (CAHM) is being celebrated in Massachusetts under the auspices of Institute of Caribbean Studies (ICS). We are calling it MassCAHM and Dr Claire Nelson, president of ICS, launched our program on February 28, 2007 at Western New England College. On June 3rd, 2007 is our cultural concert presentation in Boston at the Wheelock College Family Theatre.

Ronald Lammy is the ICS Regional Coordinator and serves on the national CAHM committee. His remarks from the February launch event provide the context of the MassCAHM efforts.

MassCAHM, February 28 2007

"The authentic Caribbean is made up of all of the world's peoples - African, Asian, European, Mid-Eastern and the native Amerindian. They form an ethnic montage that has composed a distinctive cultural personality.

Their rhythms are unique as seen in their performing arts - music and dance; they stimulate your sensibilities with the writings of their writers and the paintings of their painters; and they nourish you with their cosmopolitan food.

These characteristics and an early socialization in multicultural, multiracial countries have allowed West Indian immigrants, for example, to assimilate seamlessly into American society for several decades. They have an almost instinctual knowledge of how to live in cities such as Springfield and Boston and other major US metropolitan and suburban areas. We are **"MANY VOICES with ONE PURPOSE"** – contributing to America's success as a nation.

June is national **CARIBBEAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH** and in Massachusetts a cultural presentation is planned for June 3rd to showcase talent born and living in the Commonwealth.

The MassCAHM Host Committee includes a wide range of representatives of organizations and residents from across the state. Two sponsors are the North Shore Caribbean Association and the eCaroh Caribbean Emporium. Ron Reid, in the role of Artistic Director/producer of the MassCAHM cultural presentation, has defined the key objectives of the presentation.

1. To present the music traditions that have been a mainstay of the Caribbean community: calypso, reggae, Afro-Cuban rhythms, soca and jazz
2. To bring together separate bands of mostly school-age musicians who are active in their individual neighborhoods and professionally present them to the larger Massachusetts community.
3. To premiere compositions specially composed for the combined ensembles in the Massachusetts 2007 CAHM celebration

2007 is a special year for CAHM as the first anniversary of this national recognition. This year is also the tenth anniversary of the first presentation of calypso and steelband music at Boston's Symphony Hall through a major presenting organization. The National Caribbean American Heritage Month provides the opportunity for us to present our youth and other accomplished Caribbean Americans in Massachusetts.

On June 3rd, we start an annual recognition of those with West Indian traditions who contribute positively to the America we live in. West Indians played a role in the founding of this great nation and we will continue to give and achieve in every facet of American life. Among the many voices, we have one purpose – a successful America for all.