

# W&A ANNUAL REPORT

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Children depicted in the document are volunteer models or participants of our conferences and trainings. They are not actual victims. We thank them for their participation and their parents who allowed them to be involved.



## Word and Action Annual Report 2014-2015

### Mission

Word and Action, Inc. is a nonprofit organization that aims to prevent the occurrence of child sexual abuse with the Haitian community as well as other communities throughout the United States. W&A promotes a culturally-based approach to sexual abuse prevention and treatment while expanding its partnership and network at the national and international level.

### Vision

It is imperative to us that the children we are serving learn safety measures against sexual abuse and sexual predator. They will learn how to cope with the trauma caused by sexual abuse. Victims' relatives will learn effective ways to protect their children against sexual predators. Also, they will learn about sexual abuse and the symptoms pertaining to the trauma.

### Values

Word and Action is dedicated to respecting, honoring, protecting, and healing the children and families whom we serve.



Let's talk  
about the **ABUSE**

# W&A Initiative & Intervention

## a life changing mission

This year, W&A was able to implement its child sexual abuse prevention initiative through a series of conferences and trainings in Florida. More than ten different conferences and seminars were hosted by W&A in the counties of Miami- Dade and Broward. The names, dates, and locations are listed below.

These conferences and trainings were based upon child sexual abuse (CSA) and human trafficking. Our types of initiatives have enabled W&A to reach more than 1,500 people as a community-based organization. W&A was able to hold most of this year's conferences and seminars in churches and community centers.

Church members and leaders were educated and trained on the signs and symptoms of CSA as well as appropriate protocols to follow in cases of either suspected or confirmed CSA. Participants were taught about the devastating impact of CSA, not only on the victims, but also on the community at large. In order to further empower these individuals, W&A provided them with extra resources and materials relating to the overall awareness of CSA.

True to its mission, W&A held a number of activities in South Florida in 2014. For example, on March 8, W&A launched its first annual "Gospel Nite" event in North Miami. The purpose of that event was to raise awareness about child sexual abuse within the youth population.



In collaboration with North Miami Senior High School, W&A was able to get the participation of the school's JROTC Pioneer Battalion Exhibition Squad.

Performers included Yvons "Kapi" Andre, a singer and musician from Tabou Combo, an internationally recognized Haitian band. Local singers Neomie Joanis and Gaetan Ceasar, as well as the praise group from Jeriko SDA Church (Broward-based), and the vocal group Supremacy, enhanced the event through a series of great performances.

The event reached its pinnacle with our guest of honor, State Representative Daphne Campbell, of Florida's District 108. Campbell tackled head on the issue of child sexual abuse. She underlined several bills that she proposed and supported, which would drastically reduce CSA in the state of Florida. She also highlighted the extra financial support that organizations such as W&A desperately need, in order to fulfill their mission.

### Conferences & Trainings:

W&A has reached more than 1,500 people during its multiple conferences and training in Dade and Broward county. As a community-based organization, W&A was able to hold most of this year's conferences and seminars in churches and community centers.







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It is worth noting that as a result of Mrs. Campbell's dynamic leadership, W&A was added on the Florida House of Representatives' 2014—2015 budget. Although overlooked for 2014, we are confident that Representative Campbell's efforts will be tenaciously influential in 2015.

The 2014 "Gospel Nite" initiative was introduced by a W&A Ambassador, Executive Chef Pierre B. Moise, who offered his support by preparing exquisite refreshments for the crowd during the event, courtesy of his Chef Services and Events company.

Following this well-received event, March 13 saw Georges Bossous, Jr., W&A's executive director, along with Ms. Wallis

Etienne, the organization's community outreach director, meet with several staff members from the Florida Attorney General's Office in Miami. Attendees of that meeting offered their support to W&A, in terms of training and programs pertaining to sexual assault victims. Both camps have pledged to continue to collaborate in order to protect more children from being abused.

On September 27, W&A received an invitation to host a seminar at yearly leadership conference for several youth leaders at Camp Kolakwa in Gainesville, Florida. The leaders were trained about child sexual abuse in terms of its signs, symptoms, and the implementation of community-wide prevention programs. Several printed materials including brochures, pamphlets, and other documents were distributed.

## Advocacy and Awareness



In order to continue to raise awareness and effectively advocate for child sexual abuse victims in our community, over 1,500 brochures and pamphlets

were distributed throughout Miami-Dade and Broward counties. At least three public service announcements (PSA) were broadcasted on community radio stations and television programming. Those PSAs were also posted on our website, [www.wordandaction.org](http://www.wordandaction.org), as well as our Facebook and Twitter pages.

More than 15 radio and television interviews related to child sexual abuse and trafficking were given in 2014 and on

September 26, Georges Bossous, Jr., was invited to be on Haiti Journal, a PBS/Chanel 2 show. In collaboration with Deputy Chief Assistant Attorney Marie-Jo Toussaint of the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office. Bossous raised awareness about child sex trafficking not only in South Florida, but also in Haiti. A few weeks later, Mr. Bossous was invited by Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle, along with other community leaders, to participate in a conversation regarding human trafficking in our communities.

Prior to the PBS interview, Bossous was invited by an American government radio station, Voice of America (VOA), for an interview. Following the first interview, Mr. Bossous was asked to lead a mini series of three segments on child sexual abuse on the same radio station. Continuing his service for the past six months Bossous has been conducting a segment about child sexual abuse prevention called "Ti Kwen Lafanmy" (Family Corner) during Brase Lide Show, produced and hosted by Berlotte Antoine on Radio Comedy FM, a New York-based community radio station. The same segment is broadcasted simultaneously on at least three different stations in the US, as well as in Haiti. The segment is also broadcasted on the Internet and can also be found on websites such as SoundCloud.

The advocacy and awareness of CSA eventually led Mr. Bossous to Tallahassee, Florida, courtesy of an invitation from State Representative Daphne Campbell, who introduced a bill to help decrease the occurrence of child sexual abuse in the state.

# Taking to Haitian Streets Against Child Sexual Abuse



[MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA] - Haiti's third annual **Carnaval des Fleurs** received an additional element of celebration when **Word and Action (W&A)** nonprofit organization permissibly joined the floats. Courtesy of Dr. Claude Surénat, Mrs. Nancy Carraha, Mr. Philippe Dodard, and Mr. Yves Pennel, thirty Haitian Red Cross volunteers paraded through the crowded streets of Port-au-Prince on behalf of Word and Action with banners hailing "Children are flowers, do not abuse them." and "Say No to child sexual abuse"

In a bold attempt to speak out against the silent cries of sexually abused children, Word & Action garnered a worldwide audience to sit up and be aware of this epidemic. Overseen by the office of **President Michel Martelly**, the Carnival was and is part of the revitalization of Haiti since it suffered one of the world's biggest natural disasters in 2010 taking the lives of 250,000 of the President's people. This said during the time of carnival highs there are prolific lows indicating sexual abuse to be rife and reports are documented as accidental incidents never rape or sexual abuse.

With Port-Au-Prince filled to capacity; according to the **Ministry of Tourism** 22,000 visitors arrive between July 20-30<sup>th</sup> and 3,000 specifically for Carnival. With a city teeming with tourists and non residents sexually based incidents are common. This is Partly why the nonprofit organization **Word and Action** selected the Carnival of Flowers as a

platform to reach a world audience and city officials with their message for Haiti to Sit up, listen and speak up!

Established in Miami in 2006, W&A has worked constantly with thousands of sexual abuse victims and plans to build a permanent psycho-therapeutic and medical center in Port-Au-Prince to treat and rehabilitate victims of abuse. **The House of Hearts** facility will attempt to tackle head on the alarming issue of sexual abuse statistics as 30% of abuse cases are family members and 50% of children under six years old with 60% heinously committed by a relative they most trusted. In Haiti the exact number of children being sexually abused is unknown, because not only is this a taboo issue but victims tend to be reluctant to report the incidents because of fear of stigmatization. Although statutory rape and sexual aggression exists in Haitian laws, however if there is no physical proof normally the abuser goes unpunished. Figures of abuse are startling as **W&A** reports that one in ten children will be sexually abused before the age of eighteen years old and 44% of rapes occur in children under eighteen. With the organization's presence at the "Carnival of Flowers" a milestone was crossed in reaching out visually and vocally to a captive worldwide audience.

Drawing the immediate attention of **The Red Cross Organization** in Haiti, interest has been expressed in the possibility of collaborating with Word and Action in an effort to bring to life **The House of Hearts Project**; initiating a unique facility, to act as a refuge for victims offering advice, prevention, rehabilitation, treatment and aid in establishing work and trades.

**W&A** will also be launching its own paperback entitled "Unspoken truths" which is to be a compilation of poetry and prose by published and unpublished writers. The highly anticipated book project, House of Hearts center and other similar projects will be featured and followed up on the W&A website [www.wordandaction.org](http://www.wordandaction.org)

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## House of Healing Hearts II a soothing place for child-victims

### SUMMARY

In the Haitian culture, sex is a taboo subject that is almost unspoken and sexual education is mostly non-existent within most of the Haitian families. As a result, incidences of sexual violence are more likely to be unreported, ignored, and totally repressed. Additionally, certain aspects of the Haitian culture and mentality may prevent both children and parents to deal appropriately with sexual abuse, which, often leads to revictimization.

### HOUSE OF HEALING HEARTS

The main purpose of the **House of Healing Hearts** is to educate, support, and treat sexually abused victims and their family.

There is no known therapeutic center that is specialized in the treatment of child sexually abuse in

Haiti. The **House of Healing Hearts** will be the first of its kind in the entire country. Therefore, child-victims will finally have a place to receive the appropriate and much needed psychological help.

**Word and Action** has already developed a “Culturally Based Approach Program” aiming at addressing the issue of child sexual abuse in Haiti. Our program is unique and has been implemented in Miami- Dade, Broward County, Florida as well as in several regions of Haiti including Limbe, Cap Haitian, and Lavalee Jacmel. Our program includes three major components: **Prevention, Education, and Treatment**. More details regarding the **House of Healing Hearts Project** could be found on: [www.wordandaction.org](http://www.wordandaction.org) or <http://www.wordandaction.org/#!projects/ciss>

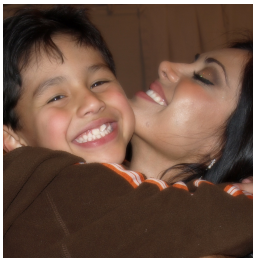


“In collaboration with the Haitian Red Cross (Club 25), W&A took the streets of Haiti to raise awareness about child sexual abuse”

“As a community-based organization, W&A has been able to hold seminars and conferences on child sexual abuse throughout Miami Dade and Broward County for more than 6 years.”



## W&A Perspectives an ever growing institution



W&A's mission includes providing treatment for sexually abused children in our community. W&A has been at the forefront of the struggle against child sexual abuse in the U.S. Its goal of providing mental health services has not been accomplished as of yet due to the velocity of the epidemic. As a result,

W&A will re-introduce the project to the Florida House of Representative for the fiscal year 2015—2016.

### LOOKING AHEAD

W&A will be launching the “Unspoken Project.” This project comprises the release of a child-friendly book and a music album of inspirational songs. The book will be a collection of

poems and prose written by well-known authors including bestselling writer, Edwidge Danticat and the Executive Director of the Haitian Heritage Museum, Eveline Pierre who has also topped the bestselling list. W&A is seeking endorsements from celebrities who want to give their voice to the cause of the child victims. This project is currently under way thanks to the leadership of Bridget Duvall Kennedy, W&A's Public Relations and Marketing Director.

W&A is also working on having a new center where sexually abused children and their families can receive the support that they need. W&A will continue to seek the funding necessary for the accomplishment of this crucial goal.

### W&A Future Projects:

- Heat Up for A Cause
- Miami Beach Fundraiser
- Healing Hearts Fundraising Gala
- Silent Cries Haiti Event



## Some Dates & Places of Intervention

- January 17–18: Haiti Renewal Alliance Business Expo, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
- January 25: Conference at Bon Samaritan Church, Fort Lauderdale
- February 19–20: Meet and Greet with State Representatives and Senators, Tallahassee
- February 22: Conference at Shilo Church, Pompano
- March 8: W&A Gospel Night, North Miami
- March 13: Meet and Greet with Attorney General Pam Bandi's personnel, Miami
- March 21–22: Conference at Shekina SDA Church, Fort Lauderdale
- March 29: Conference at Shekina SDA Church, Fort Lauderdale
- April 1–2: Meet and Greet with Lawmakers, Tallahassee



We equip and encourage our youth to take action against child sexual abuse

**WORD & ACTION, INC.**  
**"Hear The Silent Cries"**



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