

# Habichat

Habitat for Humanity International  
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## Rebuilding Haiti on star power

*By Lurma Rackley*

Habitat for Humanity played a starring role in a major fundraiser Monday in New York. Hosted by fashion designer Donna Karan, Uptown Records founder Andre Harrell, and Standard Hotel owner Andre Balazs, the \$2,500-per-plate dinner party featured singer Mary J. Blige and musician and activist Wyclef Jean, a Haiti native.

The “Night of Humanity” dinner took place at the Urban Zen Center, Karan’s studio, with the after-party at the Standard Hotel. The event launched a new organization, Hope Help & Relief Haiti, with a mission of promoting sustainable change and rebirth in Haiti through partnerships with existing organizations. Other agencies benefiting from the evening include Partners in Health and Yele Haiti, Wyclef Jean’s foundation.

Lysa Ratliff, Habitat’s resource development communications director, and Josh Lockwood, executive director of Habitat New York City, represented Habitat. They entered across a red carpet and had seats at Mary J. Blige’s table, a perfect spot to make contacts and enjoy the show, which included 10 standard and new songs from Blige.

Ratliff and Lockwood moved around the reception, dinner and

Recording artist Mary J. Blige performed 10 songs for the “Night of Humanity” dinner at the Urban Zen Center in New York.



after-party with luminaries who want to help Haiti, including designer Calvin Klein, music mogul Russell Simmons, actor Robert De Niro, comedian and “The View” co-host Whoopi Goldberg, CNN’s Soledad O’Brien, and environmental leader Bobby Kennedy Jr.

“The evening was amazing, Ratliff said. “It presented a unique opportunity for Habitat to be well-positioned among a group of incredibly influential people. People like Mary J. Blige, Russell Simmons and Calvin Klein have the means and audience to bring a new level of attention and support to the work we are doing in Haiti and around the world. These are relationships that I hope we are able to leverage in the coming months and years.”

During a live auction, nine people each bought a \$6,000 Habitat house for a Haitian family. Habitat also will receive a significant percentage of the proceeds from the evening.

Habitat will partner with the New York City Housing Authority to raise additional funds and accommodate volunteers once the permanent rebuilding phase of the work in Haiti begins.