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Inaugural GospelFest 2012 Spreads Hope Through Song

GospelFest 2012 features the Prism of Praise Community Gospel Choir and the Roger Williams University Chorus for performance and workshop



November 7, 2012 | Kaleigh Wilson '13

BRISTOL, R.I. -- As RWU Law Director of Diversity and Outreach Deborah Johnson scrolled through her emails on Monday morning, she quickly became overwhelmed by the letters of praise she received for bringing an inaugural event to campus. One note, she says, captures the entire essence of the event.

"It was extraordinary to see the whole atrium rocking with the passion and energy of the gospel choir and the RWU chorus," the message read.

An afternoon full of spirited singing, the first-ever GospelFest at RWU began with a workshop, which brought together community members to learn the art of gospel music and practice a song to be performed alongside the Prism of Praise Community Gospel Choir and the Roger Williams University Chorus during the evening public performance.

"This portion of GospelFest involved experiential learning which there is a big emphasis on here at RWU," Johnson says.

The Prism of Praise Community Gospel Choir became known to members of the Roger Williams Community after RWU Law Dean David Logan attended a performance and insisted that their talents be heard on campus, Johnson noted. A Christian music group, Prism of Praise prides itself on its multiethnicity, recognizing people's differences and celebrating diversity. Gospel music's greatest contribution to society, according to Prism of Praise music director Michael Évora, is hope.

This inaugural event sparked the collaboration of a unique cohort of cosponsors: the Roger Williams University School of Law, the RWU Music Department and the University's Spiritual Life Program. These groups brought together a diverse body of participants unified in song to inspire the emotive and excited audience in Global Heritage Hall. With the devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy still sharp in people's minds, donations to the Red Cross for relief to victims of Hurricane Sandy were collected at the conclusion of the event to the impressive tune of more than \$550.

"It was a magical evening," Johnson says.

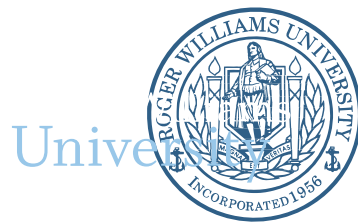
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