



AP Photos CHERY DIEU NALIO

## TAKING TO HAITIAN STREETS AGAINST CHILD SEX ABUSE

**PRESS RELEASE: Posted July 30, 2014 9.00AM PORT AU PRINCE, HAITI.** Haiti's third annual **Carnaval des Fleurs** received an additional element of celebration when **Word & Action** non-profit organization volunteers permissibly joined the procession through the crowded streets of **Port –au- Prince** brandishing banners hailing “ Children are flowers , do not abuse them.” In a bold attempt to speak out against the silent cries of sexually abused children, W & A garnered a worldwide audience to become aware of this epidemic. Overseen by **President Michel Martelly** whose intention is to revitalize Haiti's growth and tourism since one of the world's biggest natural disasters in 2010 took the lives of 250,000 of his people.

According to the **Ministry of Tourism** 22,000 visitors arrived between July20-30<sup>th</sup> and 3,000 specifically for Carnival. An ideal platform for free speech, the non -profit organization Word & Action took a stand joining revelers and city officials with a message to protect the safety of future generations. Prolific facts indicate this neglect of child sexual abuse following carnival reports of injuries where issues of rape are not documented as 800 accidental incidents were reported with no reports of any sexual abuse.

**W& A** established in Miami in 2006 is at a point this year to create immediate awareness to child sexual abuse in Haiti and moving forward has plans to build a permanent psychotherapeutic and medical centre known as “**House of Hearts**” in Port au Prince to treat and rehabilitate victims out into the society.

This house of healing is to welcome victims of abuse and address the alarming issue of **30% of sexual abuse cases being family members and 50% of children under six years old. 60% are committed by a relative they most trusted;** Haiti must accept child sex abuse to be punishable by law. At present coercing, persuasion or forcing a minor is not considered a criminal act and numbers of sexual incidents is on the rise. With a black and white state of silence becoming a global issue , W& A reports the statistics that one in ten children will be sexually abused before eighteen and 44% of rapes occur in children under eighteen.

**Word & Action** were present at this highly publicized event “Carnival of Flowers “to reach a captive worldwide audience and accomplished meetings with **The Red Cross** organization in Haiti who are in a position to offer temporary relief prior to the historical ground breaking of The House of Hearts.

**House of Hearts** facility once fully funded will offer much belated advise, rehabilitation, treatment and aid in establishing work and trades for victims. **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. There will also be celebrity's personal stories of healing and words from those empathetic towards children's rights. The book project and House of Hearts will be featured and followed up on the W& A website [www.wordandaction.com](http://www.wordandaction.com)

Director of Media & Marketing: **Contact** Bridget Duvall Kennedy 786.704.2338 [kennedysfo1@aol.com](mailto:kennedysfo1@aol.com)