

2006 Florida Cities of Excellence Awards Program ▶ Nomination Form

Category (Please check one) See Award Criteria for more information. Please print or type. One nomination per page.

FLORIDA CITY OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

Name of Municipality Nominated _____

Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY SPIRIT AWARD

Name of Municipality Nominated City of Lauderhill

Nominated Project Unite-A-Fest Event

Nominated by City of Lauderhill
(Name of City/Town/Village)

MAYOR OF THE YEAR

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

COUNCIL MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Title _____ Department _____

Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY CLERK OF THE YEAR

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY FINANCE OFFICIAL (DIRECTOR OR OFFICER) OF THE YEAR

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)



In understanding the City's recently adopted Mission Statement, the City Commission and Administration have made it a priority to celebrate the City's vast cultural diversity. With over 40 languages spoken in the City and residents who are from the Caribbean countries such as Guyana, Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago, Grenada, St. Lucia, Antigua & Barbuda, St. Kitts & Nevis, Dominica, among others, would find it difficult to believe that we all happily reside here in absolute peace and harmony.

Lauderhill's Mission Statement

*To make the **City of Lauderhill** a secure, clean, and desirable place to live, work and visit by providing for a continually improving wide range of services; to encourage a community that retains and promotes employment opportunities, economic growth and improved quality of life, where people of diverse cultural backgrounds and incomes peacefully interrelate.*

Unite-A-Fest is a Caribbean festival that was started in 1998 as a partnership between the City of Lauderhill, The Lauderhill Mall Merchants Association, and the Caribbean National Cultural Association. The festival was created to showcase the different cultures of the Caribbean countries in the form of music, foods, and arts and crafts. There are close to 200,000 Caribbean nationals currently residing in our Tri-County area. With the City of Lauderhill geographically at the center of it all, how could we possibly not share all of our good fortune with others!

The Unite-A-Fest Caribbean Celebration is not just a party; it is a means of learning and appreciating island cultures. Each island's individuality and unique qualities contribute to the

success of our ever growing, vibrant community here in South Florida. Although each island has its own distinctive flavor, the united participation truly reflects the spirit of the event, thus the name UNITE-A-FEST!

As the Broward Times reported, *"We have a lot of festivals and I think this is the one that is most genuinely Caribbean, some of the festivals are dominated by one country, but this one is a real genuine mix."* This festival provides a chance for all Caribbean cultures to come together and celebrate their heritage, African, Chinese, and Indian influences are just a few of the cultures reflected in the food, arts, dance and music...truly a melting-pot of Caribbean ethnicity. Friends and family from as far away as Canada, New York, Orlando, and California visit our event each year.

Our event has now grown to three days. This year Unite-A-Fest will commence on Friday, March 9th, from 7-11 PM, Saturday, March 10th, from 11AM - 11PM, and Sunday, March 11th, from 1-9 PM. Friday night includes food, drinks, and the sweet sound of several steel pan bands, some hailing from the Caribbean as well as our local bands. Saturday includes the women's Netball Competition beginning at 10:00 am and the opening ceremony at 4 pm. Rides, music, and food continually provide a fun-family friendly environment that all can enjoy throughout the three days event, ending on Sunday with the grand finale of some of the most popular Caribbean music bands, dancers, and entertainers.

Unite-A-Fest has grown from a small festival to one of the largest, colorful and well attended Caribbean festivals in the State of Florida. Our original sponsors such as the Sun Sentinel, Western Union and Laparkan Shipping are still with us today, and have realized how important this Caribbean community has affected the success of their business growth. True community

involvement ensures the success of this event. We invite YOU, your family, and friends to come out and experience the sights, sounds, and tastes of the tropics - right here in the City of Lauderhill at the Lauderhill Mall!

- 1) Our Unite-A-Fest program is a good example of cultural diversity at its best. Many cities Commissioners and Administrators find this diversity as something of a daunting or troublesome undertaking. In our City, it's always been our greatest asset and blessing. Lauderhill's five elected officials and staff are a diverse group as well. There are almost 500 employees, 48% white, 47% black, 5% Hispanic, and 1% Asian workers.

The City Commission supports the program in many ways. First, in theory we all agree that Unite-A-Fest epitomizes the Mission Statement and brings an incredible amount of visitors to our fabulous City. We earmark funds to be the primary financial sponsor and dedicate countless staff personnel to work with the community and bring all ideas to fruition, and we all participate in the three day event. You will find any or all of us at the Opening Ceremonies along with the local Caricom Consul Generals, who always attend the opening ceremonies and take pleasure in representing their respective nation. Throughout the day you will find a number of our Commissioners partaking in the costume parade, judging a beauty pageant, or indulging in the delectable foods of the islands! Who said Commissioners are stuffy and have no fun?

- 2) *The Unite-A-Fest Cultural Extravaganza* is the premier Caribbean showcase in South Florida. It is FREE and open to the public for all to enjoy. Events and activities are geared to be inclusive of people of all backgrounds and all ages. Caribbean born visitors and American attendees are all comfortable in an easy going, light hearted, and hospitable

environment. An event of this size and nature is not meant to make money, but educate and celebrate. The cultures ranges from Indian, African, Chinese, Dutch, Hispanic, to French...a fusion of ethnicity, making this one of South Florida's unique and valued cultural event.

The cultural portion of the event is authenticated and spearheaded by the Caribbean National Cultural Association, who handles all the performances and acts while ensuring that many local Caribbean Cultural Associations participate in presenting foods and arts and craft booths. Some of the associations who participated in years past were Antigua/Barbuda, St. Kitts/Nevis, Jamaica, Virgin Islands, Bahamas, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Suriname, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Grenada, Mexico, and Dominica.

- 3) What is most important for the Commissioners and leaders of our communities, who are new to diversity, is to remain open to new foods, ideas, music, food, businesses and most importantly, people. Understand that the cultural differences that exist should be celebrated....not feared! What we all share in human commonalities far exceeds our inconsequential differences. All people, no matter where we come from, love our children and desire to have a nice-safe home for our families. We are all here in the United States of America to seek the American Dream – where life, liberty, and happiness, can become a reality and not just a dream for people of all cultures and heritages.