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PRESS RELEASE

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CariBeat Signs Historic MOU with Meridian Center for Cultural Diplomacy for the Development and Implementation of a Steelpan Cultural Exchange and Youth Development Program

Washington, DC: Today, CariBeat, the Exclusive Agents for bp Renegades Steel Orchestra in the US and Canada, announced that they signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Meridian Center for Cultural Diplomacy, the leading center in the United States that employs arts and culture as a tool of diplomacy and cross-cultural understanding. Through this MOU, CariBeat and Meridian - both based in the Washington, DC metro area - will work together for the development and implementation of the first-ever Steelpan Cultural Exchange and Youth Development Program of its kind, in the United States.

The program is geared to directly address the serious problems of juvenile delinquency which are threatening the economic growth, safety and security, and overall quality of life in major metropolises throughout the United States. In the exchange program's dynamic, interactive, and engaging sessions, American youth participants will learn the dynamics of steelpan music, including its history and how to play the instrument, while youth from Trinidad and Tobago will learn the dynamics of several genres of American music, including jazz, rap, and hip-hop. Together, youth from both nations will learn the principles and practices of civility, integrity, critical thinking, ethics, discipline, teamwork, community, and volunteerism, as well as professional deportment and communication skills, including proper manners, dining protocols, and other forms of social etiquette.

The Steelpan Cultural Exchange and Youth Development Program will be officially launched in June 2024 - during Caribbean American Heritage Month in the US - with an exchange involving members of both the 2024 National Panorama Champions, bp Renegades Steel Orchestra and the 2024 Junior Panorama Champions, bp Renegades Youth Steel Orchestra with middle school and high school youth from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Delaware, and Boston.

According to CariBeat's President, Luis V. McSween - "This Steelpan Cultural Exchange and Youth Development Program comes out of the real-life results that CariBeat and bp Renegades have seen from the engagement of youth in the discipline of Steelpan. What we know for sure is that the problem of juvenile delinquency can only be solved through a multi-faceted approach that leverages something new and exciting that our youth enjoy - music - to teach them how to become productive members of their communities. Our youth will not pick up positive behaviors through osmosis. We have to teach them, engage them, and demonstrate these behaviors to them in fun and engaging ways. We are grateful for the support of the Embassy of Trinidad and Tobago in Washington, DC, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, and the private and public sector partners, who have already expressed their excitement about being a part of this phenomenal project".

Fresh on the heels of bp Renegades' victory at the National Panorama Finals on February 10 and still in celebratory mode, Renegades' President Colin Greaves said that "The timing is perfect for this Steelpan Youth Exchange and Professional Development Program, and we are thrilled that discussions that began in 2023, as part of our 75th Anniversary Tour to DC, have borne fruit. bp Renegades is honored to be Trinidad and Tobago's first steel orchestra to participate in this monumental program. This is the icing on the cake of our Panorama victory, and we are delighted that our agent for the US and Canada, CariBeat, is leading the charge."

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About CariBeat

Founded by Trinidadians Luis and Monique McSween in 2008, CariBeat is the leading Caribbean Lifestyle Company in the US with a mission of delivering extraordinary Caribbean-style events, cultural experiences, cuisine, apparel, and decor to every corner of the US. CariBeat is headquartered in the Washington, DC Metro Area and is the Exclusive Agents, in the US and Canada, for bp Renegades Steel Orchestra.

For more information on CariBeat, visit CariBeat.com.

About Meridian Center for Cultural Diplomacy

The Meridian Center for Cultural Diplomacy is the leading center in the United States that employs arts and culture as a tool of diplomacy and cross-cultural understanding. The Center collaborates with embassies, governments, and the private sector to curate cultural diplomacy exhibitions, exchanges, and programs in Washington, D.C. and worldwide.

Meridian works in partnership with the U.S. Department of State, American embassies, as well as the diplomatic community in Washington, D.C. to develop and curate exhibitions, exchanges and programs that range from film screening to mural arts programs to hip-hop music performances. Meridian's programs have reached millions in more than 260 cities in 60 countries worldwide.

For more information on Meridian, visit Meridian.org.