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Detroiters to get new water meters

By Scott Talley | Published 08/15/2007 | FrontPAGE - Business | Unrated

Detroiters to get new water meters Scott Talley

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When it comes to helping people in need, Roland Odeleye has proven he can get the job done, even if it means overcoming geographic boundaries and great distance.

Despite the demands of his work at Comerica Bank and huge logistical challenges, Odeleye launched a non-profit organization that is providing vital assistance to people more than 5,000 miles away.

Named in honor of Odeleye's late father, the Abel Ogundokun Odeleye Foundation addresses the welfare and educational needs of a six-town community located in the western region of Nigeria.

On Friday, Aug. 24, pianist/vocalist Rick DellaRatta and Jazz for Peace will conduct a benefit concert for the Abel Ogundokun Odeleye Foundation beginning 6:30 p.m. at the Positive Vibration Wine Bar in Orion Township.

"Honoring dad's last wish and preserving his legacy was at the core of the decision to establish the foundation," said Odeleye, a vice president in Comerica's Business Technology Services Department.

"And although I have spent a bit of time volunteering locally here in the greater Detroit metropolitan area, I felt compelled to reach out further because of the challenges that I am aware of in developing countries."

Last year the foundation conducted a four-day health fair serving more than 1,100 people, awarded 35 scholarships and commissioned the construction of a public borehole to provide safe drinking water.

Future goals for the foundation include expanding the health fairs, addressing malaria prevention, awarding more scholarships, providing a functional classroom and library to an adopted school and building another borehole to provide safe drinking water.

"As much hard work as is involved with running the foundation, there is nothing more fulfilling than the knowledge that you're making a difference and constructively shaping the lives of individuals that have no chance of returning the favor," said Odeleye, a past recipient of Comerica's National Quality Excellence Award and past finalist for the bank's National Volunteer of the Year award.

"The gratitude and appreciation of the beneficiaries is genuine and a powerful motivator. And I wouldn't trade the hard work it takes for anything else."

To learn more about the Abel Ogundokun Odeleye Foundation, including the Aug. 24 benefit concert, visit www.aoo.org, or call 734-417-2784 after 6 p.m. For additional information on Jazz For Peace, visit www.jazzforpeace.org

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