From: Sharon Alkire
To: Schaaf, Libby
Subject: Re: Local Heroes event
Date: Sunday, February 09, 2014 12:21:54 PM

Dear Libby,

Thank you very much for your very informative reply. I understand how last minute changes can throw things for a loop. Good luck in your Mayoral campaign!

-Sharon

On Feb 8, 2014, at 2:22 PM, Schaaf, Libby <LSchaaf@oaklandnet.com> wrote:

> Dear Sharon,
> I am very sorry this marred an otherwise uplifting event. We usually use the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir and work with them ahead of time to ensure their selections are sensitive to our diverse audience. However, this year they cancelled on us a few days before the date, causing us to put out last minute calls to schools and churches for a choir. I didn't think we had found one, so was surprised myself to see Shiloe there this morning. I'm sorry these circumstances didn't afford us the opportunity to discuss their selections. I'm very sorry we presented music that wasn't sensitive to our audience nor appropriate for a city-sporsored event. We'll do better next time.
>
> Thank you for coming today and for taking the time to share your concerns. This is a very special event for us and we always want to ensure it makes our heroes feel honored and builds a fully inclusive sense of community.
> Best,
> Libby
>
> Sent from my iPhone
>
> On Feb 8, 2014, at 12:46 PM, "Sharon Alkire" <sharon.alkire@gmail.com> wrote:
>
>> Dear Councilwoman Schaaf,
>>
>> I attended the wonderful Local Heroes event today at the Allendale Recreation Center and was inspired by the variety of work the award recipients are doing. Thank you very much for continuing to recognize these outstanding community members.
>>
>> I was, however, dismayed to find myself compelled to listen to the Shiloh Church Chorus as they sang praises to Jesus Christ at a City-sponsored event held in a City-operated facility. I appreciate that Christianity is a major part of many Oakland communities and families, but it does not represent a

significant portion of Oakland residents, myself included. In fact, one of today's honorees told me that she was glad she couldn't quite make out the words in the second song, because the voices were beautiful but she didn't want to hear about Jesus.

I ask that next year the songs are non-secular, no matter which organization sings them. Please leave religion out of City of Oakland events.

Sincerely,

Sharon Alkire