

After the tropical storm Erika Freiburg native gathers for people in Dominica

The songwriter Mary Sylvester supports with her Charity organisation people on the island of Dominica in the Caribbean.

By Bettina Gröber / Badische Zeitung, Freiburg, Germany, 22 September, 2015



© Photograph: Thomas Kunz

Mary Sylvester

It is a message that was more a side note in light of other crises and events in Germany and Europe: End of August 2015 the tropical storm "Erika" has caused serious damage in the Caribbean and on the tiny island of Dominica. 35 confirmed dead, many injured, destruction of large parts of the infrastructure, and many destroyed homes: the human and material losses have hit the 70 000 residents of the 750 square kilometres island very hard.

With the non-profit organisation "Dominica Charity Foundation" Mary Sylvester supports since 2006 the people on the island - especially in the medical field, where there are always deficiencies. The reason for her commitment was a visit to Dominica, where Mary Sylvester became ill and there was no medication at the local hospital for her treatment.

Since Mary Sylvester wanted to do something to help, and based on the advice from her doctor, the best thing was to form a Charity organisation. After the recent disaster in Dominica some people have quickly donated material goods: "I thank each donor, now our warehouse is full, and there are 15 boxes alone from helpers from Saxony," says Mary Sylvester.

"We still need children and school supplies." And especially money: because the freight to Dominica and to distribute the goods there, the Dominica Charity Foundation quickly needs at least €10.000 Euro. And Mary Sylvester hopes: "Maybe there are also shipping companies that could provide a container for the transport of the supplies." Donors can be assured that their money will get to the right places to benefit the people - because Mary Sylvester and her assistants bring the aid directly to the people in Dominica.

Mary Sylvester became famous in Freiburg as a singer and songwriter. Her repertoire covers a wide range and consists of Blues, Reggae, Funk, Soul, Rock, Jazz and Gospel. With her band she played in Freiburg in the Konzerthaus and in the Jazzhaus, and with open-air concerts throughout Europe. Mary Sylvester has also published ten CDs and a book: "Schwarz im Schwarzwald" (Black in the Black Forest). The many years that she spent in Germany and especially in Freiburg have led the US-artist to say "I am more German than American." Even during her visits to America or the Caribbean she is known as "the German woman."

In recent years the music has become a little quieter, says Mary Sylvester - mainly for personal reasons. But personal disappointments and losses had not brought her to give up: "I'll come back," she promises. With a Gospel benefit concert at Christmas time she wants to raise money for the Dominica Charity Foundation. But she is still looking for a concert hall in Freiburg. Themes of love and mutual understanding, which she processed in her lyrics, are also a link between music and social commitment, says Mary Sylvester. Both are close to her heart.

Therefore, Mary Sylvester also knows about the difficulties the Dominica Charity Foundation was confronted with from the beginning: "The small Charities are rarely perceived by the public, they only help large fundraisers", says Mary Sylvester. Currently she and her assistants face the problem that the omnipresent refugee crisis are displacing other disasters from the media and the consciousness of the people: "the refugees are seen by people every day - but those affected in Dominica not."

Donations to the Dominica Charity Foundation for help:

Name: Dominica Hilfe e.V.

Bank: Sparkasse Freiburg-Breisgau-Nord

IBAN: DE89680501010012605242

BIC: FRSPD66

More Info: www.dominica-charity.org