Gospel Idol contest to urge organ donations

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By Courier Newsroom

The Center for Organ Recovery & Education's Pittsburgh Multicultural Task Force held its inaugural "Pledge for Life" Gospel Idol on Feb. 8 at the O'Hara Student Center Ballroom on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh. Bishop Loran Mann, of the Pentecostal Temple Church, in Pittsburgh, served as emcee.

"We are excited to hold our inaugural 'Pledge for Life' Gospel Idol to raise awareness for the urgent need for organ, tissue and cornea donors while enjoying the sounds of gospel music and other performances from our contestants," said Susan Stuart, president and CEO of CORE. "We are pleased to commemorate National Donor Day and Black History Month with this event…We hope that attendees who are not already registered donors will make the Pledge for Life and sign up…"

There were performances from both the top 10 finalists and several national recording artists—along with individuals sharing their stories about how organ donation has impacted their lives. CORE, a federally designated not-for-profit organ procurement organization that serves Pennsylvania, West Virginia and parts of New York, used the powerful sounds of gospel music to bring people together to share the important message of organ, tissue and cornea donation. A panel of judges chose the top 10 finalists who performed live for prizes that included first place ($1,000), second place ($750), third place ($500) and Viewer's Choice ($250).

Judges included Danielle Smith of WGBN's American Urban Radio Network "HOT or NOT"; Charmalene Ulmer of WERG Erie's "Morning Glory"; Stephanie Smith of Pittsburgh Gospel Showcase; Frederick Dukes Jr., a five-time award nominee, singer, songwriter and producer; and Misty Enos, interim director of Professional Services and Community Outreach at CORE.

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