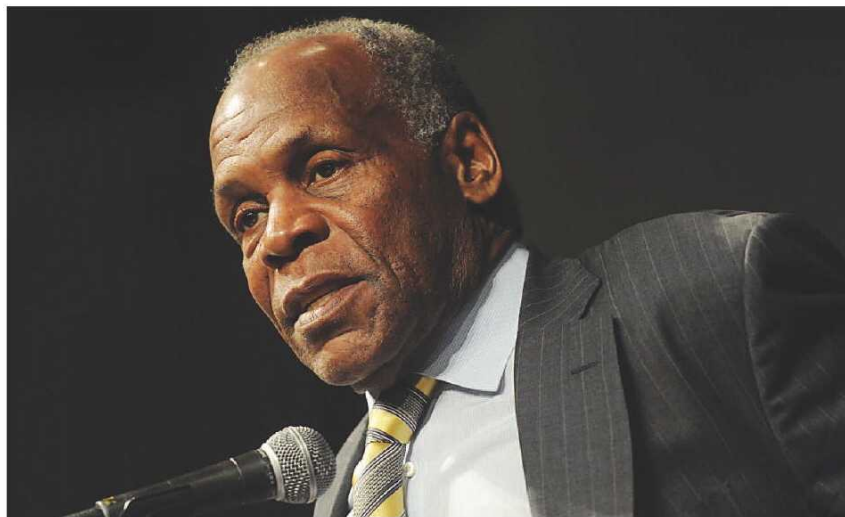


"Whatever the questions are, Benton Harbor is a place where certainly we can look for those answers and look for people who are trying to find answers, and trying to find answers is all we can do at this time."

DANNY GLOVER
Actor



Photos by Don Campbell / HP staff

Actor and activist Danny Glover speaks during the Black Autonomy Network Community Organization (BANCO) Justice Fund Dinner on Saturday at Lake Michigan College. The star of the "Lethal Weapon" movies and the UNICEF ambassador noted the financial problems facing Benton Harbor, and that the city's residents are finding ways of fighting back.

Actor Danny Glover speaks at fundraiser

Benton Harbor a place to find answers, actor says

By **LOUISE WREGE**
HP Staff Writer

BENTON TOWNSHIP — The financial crisis in Benton Harbor is an example of what is happening in cities throughout the nation, actor and activist Danny Glover said at the BANCO Justice Fund Dinner on Saturday.

Jill Stein, the 2012 presidential candidate for the Green Party, also spoke at the fundraiser hosted by the Black Autonomy Network Community Organization at the Mendel Center at Lake Michigan College.

"Benton Harbor is like so many communities in our country," Glover said during a news conference before the event. "Not only have they been devastated by the recent downturn in the economy

but they've been, for years, subject to extraordinary fiscal depression. The loss of tax revenue. The loss of jobs. The de-industrialization that has happened over many communities in this country."

He said the big question is where does the city go from here?

"Whatever the questions are, Benton Harbor is a place where certainly we can look for those answers and look for people who are trying to find answers, and trying to find answers is all we can do at this time," said Glover, who starred in the "Lethal Weapon" movies and "The Color Purple," and is the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) ambassador.

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Jill Stein, Green Party presidential candidate in 2012, speaks during the Black Autonomy Network Community Organization (BANCO) Justice Fund Dinner on Saturday at Lake Michigan College. Stein noted that half of Americans are living in poverty or on low incomes.

GLOVER

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“Benton Harbor represents a place where, perhaps, the work that people do in finding ways to resist, whether it’s management of the city, the loss of electoral power, the disenfranchisement that is happening ... whatever the questions are, Benton Harbor is a place where we can look for those answers.”

During his speech, he said the crisis Benton Harbor has been in for years has diminished the

community’s capacity to take care of its own needs. He said it is a crisis of resources, which is occurring all over the world.

In this age of consumerism, he said it is time to reimagine the idea of democracy itself.

“How does it function within a system of capitalism that’s main purpose is exploitation?” he asked. “How does democracy itself function when the wealth and control of everything we do is controlled by a handful of people?”

While talking about Martin Luther King Jr.,

he said an injustice anywhere in the world is an injustice to everyone.

Jill Stein said the current system is not working. She said one out of every three African American men are held hostage by the “prison-industrial complex,” and half of Americans are living in poverty or are low-income.

Education isn’t the ladder to prosperity it used to be, Stein charged.

“Thirty-nine million students and recent graduates are indentured servants because they owe debt on school loans,” she

said. “The price (of education) is skyrocketing and the jobs just aren’t there. The Bureau of Labor statistics says that 9 out of 10 jobs coming on line in the next decade are going to be low-wage, insecure jobs. Half of them don’t even require a high school degree.”

Cities like Benton Harbor are the harbinger of things to come, she warned.

“What Benton Harbor is fighting is soon going to be what we’re fighting all over America,” Stein said. “It’s the spirit of Benton Harbor that has enabled

us to come together and fight this because they may be the 1 percent but we are the 99 percent. This is a numbers game and we’re going to win.”

Benton Harbor activist Edward Pinkney said money raised during the fundraiser would be used to fund scholarships for three Benton Harbor High School students and for a grant for the Benton Harbor Children’s Garden on Baird Street, an urban garden developed by Emma Kinnard of Benton Harbor.

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