

## **5<sup>th</sup> *One Big Event* is One Big Triumph!**

It was the party everyone was anticipating. It was the affair that took months of preparation. It was the event you had to be at. The Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective's annual fundraiser *One Big Event* was another great success! It's now not only a highlight on the calendar for LGBT folks, but for all hip and trendy people in the know. With a record-breaking crowd of almost 450, attendance is almost mandatory.

"We work hard to keep *OBE* fresh and exciting," said Linda Estabrook, Executive Director. "We purposely made changes that people had suggested to make this benefit even more successful." Change number one was a move to the Hilton Hartford Hotel. This allowed us to celebrate in the city where we operate and to have a larger venue. Our good friend, Michael Wilson, from the Hartford Stage served as emcee this year. His warmth and charm delighted the audience. Everyone enjoyed the funky sounds of Paprika, Brooklyn's all women's world music band. When the conga line began, we knew that the night was a hit.

Comedian Andre Kelley entertained the audience with his earthy humor during his performance. Many audience members hung out with him after his routine. The audience was notable for the celebrities in attendance, like Hartford Mayor Eddie Perez and his wife, Maria. "*One Big Event* always draws a varied crowd representing the LGBT community, their family members, straight allies and people of many ethnicities. We are very proud that we have so much support from the people of Hartford and the state," observed Board President John McGarvey.

*One Big Event* is a great night out, but it is so much more. Through ticket sales, silent and live auctions and sponsorships, including our "Biggest" sponsor ING, the Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective was able to raise funds for the many services that it provides to the LGBT and HIV/AIDS communities. In the ever changing climate of government and foundation support, we depend more than ever on our friends and allies for our stability and future growth. *One Big Event* gives everyone the opportunity to celebrate the work that makes the Health Collective a unique institution in the greater Hartford community.