



Congratulations to **GRACIE XAVIER** on being a 2018 Marshall Memorial Fellow. She is one of the 74 lucky individuals who were selected for this prestigious award. The Marshall Memorial Fellowship is a leadership development program for the best and brightest from all sectors, including business, government, and civil society. Before heading for a journey that included 24 days of policy immersion in Europe, Gracie who is employed with Global Detroit, underwent a 6-month training designed to enhance her understanding of transatlantic relations. Gracie joins a network that includes exemplary alumni like the current President of France, Emmanuel Macron and the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Pinnacle Technical Resources, Nina Vaca. Félicitations Gracie! ■



## THE MODEL



On Thursday morning, March 28, **HELEN-WIDMA BERKEMEIER** was honored to be chosen to model a beautiful navy-blue Easter dress for Connie's Children's Shop on Fox2 News Morning The Nine. She wore a smart navy and white hat with matching white gloves and shoes.  
<http://www.shopconnies.com/>

Helen and her mom arrived at 8:30am at the Fox2 News studio in Southfield. They met the other young models and had about an hour to prep in the green room. Helen practiced twirling in her dress in front of the mirror, making sure her hat was on just right. The Fox2 News team was gracious, and they loved the outfits. Helen's class at Lanigan watched it live, and her math teacher recorded it. She was treated like a star that day at school! Helen looks forward to being able to model another beautiful dress from Connie's.

Helen-Widma is 10 years old and is a 4th grader at Lanigan Elementary in Farmington Hills. Her proud mom is HNGD member Jennifer Berkemeier. ■



## AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE: PLAYING AT MITCH ALBUM'S BOOK RELEASE PARTY

*Enos Fabre*

A few months ago I was lucky enough to be invited to take part in the release party for Mitch Album new book "the Next Person You Meet in Heaven". It's a sequel to one of his best-selling books "The Five People You Meet in Heaven." As with everything Mitch does, he didn't use the occasion to party with friends/celebrities and talk about his new book. He used it instead to raise money for the underserved and impoverished children of Haiti and Detroit. The event was divided into two parts, a VIP dinner followed by a talk show like format with celebrities and musical performances. I was fortunate enough to perform in both parts of the event, and the experience was nothing but amazing.

The first part of the event was the VIP dinner, which started early in the evening before the main event. It was packed with many well-known celebrities such as Anderson Cooper (CNN News anchor) - Jane Pauley (Host of CBS Sunday Morning Show) - Bob Costas (NBC Sports) - Joe Dumars (Hall of Fame Detroit Piston) - Belo (Popular Haitian Artist) - Jim Harbaugh (Michigan Football Head Coach), just to name a few. The event was hosted by Mitch himself. My good friend and saxophonist, Christopher Patterson and I played for about an hour at the VIP event. We played a mixed of different genres, which included pop, reggae, and Haitian folklore music. The crowd seemed to love it and that helped energize us and enliven the atmosphere.

For the second part of the program, the main event, I was also invited to play the opening song. I was given the instruction to play the introduction song, and told that because of lack of time, it couldn't be no more than 2 to 2.5 minutes. So, I ended up writing a 2.5 minutes song with an English and creole/French verse for the program.

As is the case with challenges, opportunities sometimes await around the corner: playing for the main event gave me the opportunity to have more intimate conversations with the celebrities backstage. For example, I found out that Piston Basketball Hall of famer Joe Dumars has Haitian heritage. In fact, his grandmother is Haitian. I should have thought of it since his last name is "Dumars" a true Haitian name. Meeting Anderson Cooper was also amazing. Based on the crowd size around him at the VIP dinner, I thought he was the biggest celebrity at the event. Talking to him, I learned that he is a very kind and humble person. He seems happy and willing to take pictures with each and every one who was there. I never saw him once com-



Enos Fabre & Anderson Cooper

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