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Contact: Beck Lee (718) 403-0939
beckblitz@aol.com

TASTE OF LIBERIA LAUNCHES IN MINNEAPOLIS TO PROMOTE LIBERIAN ART AND CUISINE

NEXTAINMENT STAGING MULTI-EVENT FESTIVAL JULY 5 TO JULY 26

(April 20, 2015) A strikingly ambitious cultural festival celebrating the cuisine, music and art of Liberia, launches this summer in July in Minnesota. Spanning the American and Liberian Independence Days from July 5 to 26, Taste of Liberia will emphasize not only the country's remarkable resilience and courage in light of the recent Ebola epidemic but also the numerous, and in many cases under-appreciated, connections and commonalities between Liberia and America.

Producing the festival is Nextainment, LLC, original producer of the popular Afrifest annual pan-African celebration in Twin Cities, MN. In making the "Taste of Liberia" announcement Nathan S. White, the event's executive producer, said, "Ex-pat Liberians in Minnesota, which represent the largest concentration of Liberians in America, have a lot to offer -- not only their home country (which is crucial of course), but also to each other and to Americans generally who often don't know about Liberia's amazing history and culture."

As Africa's only republic founded by free African-Americans, and the only African nation never colonized by outside countries, Liberia is truly a one-of-a-kind African country. Its tempestuous 168-year history, American-influenced cultural heritage, and breathtaking wealth of under-leveraged natural (non-energy) resources, make Liberia a potentially priceless country for Americans to explore and get to know. Liberia's Day of Independence is July 26.

"We want this festival to grow in scope every year... our first event will emphasize food and sampling, parties, and a fundraising activities... soon we also want to offer a forum on eco-tourism and conservation. Liberia urgently needs to save its shrinking cultural patrimony, as well as preserve some of West Africa's last remaining pristine beaches, rainforest, exotic plants and wild life. But the point is that these things still exist, and we need to act now to protect them."

In addition to helping to re-brand Liberia on the world stage, the scope of the
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festival bridges arts and entertainment while helping to springboard strong initiatives in tourism, business development, education & health care for Liberia.

The first annual “Taste of Liberia” cultural festival from July 5 to 26 will include these events (For complete details visit www.tasteofliberia.com):

Sunday July 5: Festival Kick-Off, Liberian-American Independence Day Bash with food sampling, Red Carpet, Liberia vs. USA Lip Sync Battle, music and dancing. (At Tangiers in Minneapolis, 116 N. 1st Avenue), 10pm to 2am.

Friday July 24: Welcome Happy Hour! Celebrate Liberian Independence with music and dancing, (At Tangiers in Minneapolis, 116 N. 1st Avenue) 5pm to 9pm.

Saturday July 25: Twin Cities-wide all-day sampling and shopping (with Festival discounts) at numerous participating restaurants, grocers, clothes stores, travel companies. (Food sampling at participating restaurants noon to 4pm)

Taste of Liberia Family Day Celebration. Fun in the sun including games and activities for the entire family, with a Traditional and Nouveau Liberian Cuisine “Taste-Off” voted by Blue Ribbon Panel, open to the public (Park Center High School, 7300 Brooklyn Boulevard, Brooklyn Park, MN 55443) 10am to 6pm.

Taste of Liberia 1st Annual Gala with red carpet, Liberian innovative cuisine sampling event, awards ceremony recognizing American and Liberian individuals and organizations pivotal in the Ebola relief effort. Raffle and silent auction to raise funds for Ebola orphans and relief efforts. (Park Center High School, 7300 Brooklyn Boulevard, Brooklyn Park, MN 55443) 8pm to 12am.

Sunday July 26: Day 2 of Twin Cities-wide all-day sampling and shopping at participating businesses. (Food sampling at area restaurants noon to 4pm)

Sunday July 26: Festival Closing BBQ (Park Center High School, 7300 Brooklyn Boulevard, Brooklyn Park, MN 55443) 12pm to 9pm.

By showcasing innovators in the culinary arts, visual arts, music, entrepreneurship, tourism and sustainability, “Taste of Liberia” endeavors to dramatically highlight Liberia's cultural and historical ties with the United States, its unique cultural and natural assets, and the country’s untapped potential for sustainable cultural and eco-tourism.

White adds, “The goal of this project is to foster a common pride and appreciation of all Liberians for their homeland, and to educate young African-Americans especially about their shared history with the only African nation that was never colonized by foreign countries and was founded by free African-American settlers in 1847.” For complete schedule and information visit www.tasteofliberia.com

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