

# Food for scholarship: culinarians team up

By Tasha Pope  
Sentinel-Voice

The Alliance of Black Culinarians presents the 16th annual Gourmet Grazer. This year it will be held in the Grande Ballroom at the new South Coast Hotel, 9777 Las Vegas Blvd. South, on Sunday from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

The Alliance of Black Culinarians, which is a non-profit organization, was formed in 1991 and was developed to provide scholarships to aspiring culinarians who are academically qualified but need financial assistance to continue their education.

"I started looking at ways to enhance the Black chefs, as far as preparing them for higher positions. So I formed the Alliance of Black Culinarians to provide a means of educating Black chefs [for] requirements for national certification," Williams said.

All proceeds generated from the Gourmet Grazer will go directly into the organization's scholarship fund.

The Gourmet Grazer will offer tasty treasures exquisitely prepared by some of Las Vegas's finest Black hotel and resort culinarians.

"[We] get different hotels to support Black chefs. [The hotels] furnish the food and all the things they need to participate," the organization's chairman and founder T.E. Williams said.



Sentinel-Voice file photo

A sample of the sumptuous delights that will be available at the Alliance of Black Culinarians Gourmet Grazer.

iams said.

This year, Sam's Town, Rampart, Eldorado and the Tropicana are some of the hotels and casinos that offered to participate.

Although the alliance consists primarily of African-American chefs, all chefs are welcome if they met the proper criteria.

Each year, 10 to 12 hotels participated, sending teams of 8 to 10 chefs to prepare and serve the delectable meals.

"The chefs enjoy it because it allows them to show off their talents," Williams said. The chefs will put their best dishes forward as they attempt to win over the panel of celebrity judges. The judges will taste their creations and decide which team will be presented with the People's Choice Award.

Guest judges of the past include, U.S. Congresswoman Shelley Berkley, Las Vegas City Councilman Lawrence Weekly and land developer Frank Hawkins.

"As the years pass, it has grown and it's become an outstanding evening, an

evening of entertainment and enjoyment for the community. We entertain 1,200 to 1,500 people," Williams explained.

Over the years, more than \$60,000 in scholarships have been awarded to students. The scholarships are offered to students attending Clark County high schools and all culinary schools in Las Vegas.

Although culinary students are given preference for scholarships, they are available to all students that qualify.

A location for this event wasn't reserved in the proper amount of time for Black History Month, but the essence of African-American culture will still be celebrated. Soul food will be the main style of food, and attendants will have the opportunity to taste authentic dishes.

For tickets or more information, contact Chef Adrian Hill at (702) 454-8082.

# Public lecture dissects state, culture of hip-hop

By Asmeret Asghedom  
Sentinel-Voice

Rap is based on an age-old rhythmic art form and today offers a platform for public speech and awareness to those who normally would not be given a stepping stool.

It entertained tribes in ancient West Africa with a sound that rhythmically flowed through historical times. Centuries later, its hypnotic rhythm and lyrical scheme have ventured into the inner-city streets of America.

But now, it is not just a rhythm. Mixed with DJing, rap has expanded into a hip hop culture. Several organizations in America use the cultural components of music, dance and clothing to unite the inner-city community and bring up social and political issues affecting the community.

One organization is the National Hip Hop Political Convention.

NNHPC chair Troy Nkrumah, along with national activists Rosa Clemente, Davey D and Dereca Blackmon, held a free public lecture on Saturday on the campus at University Nevada, Las Vegas.

The event was called "Knowledge, Power and Respect: The Struggle to Defend Hip Hop Culture."

"We're actually an organization that uses the tool of hip hop as a tool of self-empowerment and self-expression. It's more than just rappers; it's activists involved here," said Andreas Hale,

chair of Las Vegas Local Organization Committee or LV-LOC.

The activists discussed corporate America's role in choosing which hip hop songs are played on the radio and the psychological profiling on consumers.

Davey D, hip hop historian and webmaster, compared the psychological profiling done by corporate radio to a "playa" picking out the next person he or she plans to take home.

He said that corporations look at their options and target the groups they feel are most vulnerable which, in most cases, is youth and those who are oppressed.

"Corporations marginalize people of color," Davey D said. They negatively target Black females and make generalizations of the 'hood and use Black rappers to validate these generalizations," he explained.

"There are a lot of things going on in the 'hood. Yeah, there's drug dealing and gangs, but there's also people busting out straight A's," Davey D said.

Activists said the radio needs to provide listeners with a balance of conscious and unconscious rap.

"We can't be about banning. I'm talking about waking up and having different choices," said Clemente, New York-based social advocate.

She said that if radio stations play artists, such as 50 cent and the Ying-Yang Twins, then they should also

play more conscious rappers, such as Common and Talib Kweli.

Radio song selection is significant in the hip hop community since its youth uses hip hop as an outlet and the radio as its medium.

"Radio is the most important media for Black people, even more than TV," said Davey D quoting Martin Luther King Jr. from a 1967 speech he gave in Atlanta.

The LV-LOC has four events lined up for the next couple of months. One is a March 25 concert that will showcase local artists. At these events, members intend on influencing political awareness and active change in the community.

An example of their advocacy efforts is having voter registration forms available at events. National and local activists stress the importance of voting.

"They don't listen to us if we don't vote," Nkrumah said. People can change who holds offices in city council or other city level elected offices, such as Sheriff Bill Young who is trying to ban what he calls "gangster rap," he added.

The activist challenged audience members to take leadership roles in their communities.

"Don't look to the artist for answers, you need people who lead in the community," said Blackmon, a leader in her Oakland community.

"You don't need a whole (See Hip Hop, Page 3)



Photo special to the Sentinel-Voice

## ESTEEMED GUEST

Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee, D-Texas, (third from left) visited the combined campus of Wendell Williams and Booker elementaries last month. Accompanied by her host, Rep. Shelley Berkley, D-Nev., (middle), Jackson-Lee talked about positive choices.

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