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OUACHITA
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita to host International Food Festival Feb. 28

By Kacy Spears

February 14, 2017

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208

ARKADLEPHIA, Ark. – Ouachita Baptist University's International Club and Daniel and Betty Jo Grant Center for International Education will host the 2017 International Food Festival on Tuesday, Feb. 28, at 5:30 p.m. in Walker Conference Center on Ouachita's campus. Tickets are \$5 each at the door.

"A university is a place where we learn to engage with the world and where we give expression to this ideal in specific ways," said Ian Cosh, OBU vice president for community and international engagement. "The International Food Festival is a way for us to celebrate and highlight the privilege we have to host international students and third-culture students on campus. It is also a time when our American students can participate and have an international experience through the medium of food."

The event features dishes from across the globe, cooked by members of the Ouachita community with international ties. This year's theme, "Under One Banner," references Song of Solomon 2:4b: "His banner over me is love" (NIV). In addition to the global culinary experience, this year's event will incorporate refugee awareness and relief efforts into the festival.

The purpose of the evening is "to raise awareness and highlight the many cultures that we have on our campus," said Sharon Cosh, a staff coordinator for the event and coordinator of OBU's English as a Second Language program. "We have about 30 nations represented here, so we have great diversity on a very small campus. That's what we celebrate, but in doing so, not forgetting those who would love to be here, but cannot."

This year, the Grant Center and International Club have prepared an immersive experience in which guests can write a note to a refugee and pack a welcome kit for them or shop at a world market, which benefits refugee families. The Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union will host the fair-trade market, and OBU Campus Ministries is partnering with World Relief to provide the refugee welcome kits.

"We'll be putting together the welcome kits on the evening of the food festival, and then those will be carried by our students who are going to be working with refugees in Memphis and Anaheim this spring break," Cosh explained.

The annual event also provides an opportunity for international students to give back and invest in their community here.

"Internationals get homesick very easily," said Tristan Benzon, president of the International Club. "This is them giving back to their university. The food festival is a fun way to mix it up and express a bit of everywhere we come from. Our passion and cultures are reflected in the food and festivities."

"It's something you don't want to miss," Benzon added. "You pay five dollars, but it's a chance to eat food that you've never had in your life."

“It is an evening of celebrating the people in our lives who add texture and color on life’s journey,” Ian Cosh added. “The food festival provides a window on the world for the entire campus community.”

For more information about the International Food Festival, contact the Grant Center at 870-245-5197.

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