

Taste of the World offers a passport for the palate

Some Atlantans will be visiting Ethiopia, Vietnam, Thailand and Bangladesh next Sunday all in an afternoon and with no passport or plane ticket. At least their taste buds will take a trip to sample the culinary and cultural delights of these and many other countries at Refugee Family Services' (RFS) annual Taste the World event on March 15, 2-5 p.m., at Callanwolde Fine Arts Center in Atlanta.

This year's event, sponsored by CNN, Paul Hastings and AT Kearney among others, will feature exotic ethnic cuisine from more than 20 local restaurants as well as some of Atlanta's top chefs and catering companies. Also featured at the event are cultural exhibits, including dance, music, fashion and art, presented by members of the Atlanta refugee community.

"Refugee Family Services plays a major role in efforts to join many cultures and is a constant reminder that the world is much bigger than what we experience each day," said Dr. **Helene Gayle**, president and CEO of CARE USA. "The Taste the World event is an example of the global richness and resourcefulness exhibited by people of various backgrounds working together for the good of all."

Last year, RFS debuted a global silent auction that included art, pottery, sculpture and jewelry. This year's auction will continue to include art as well as other

international experiences, including dance and cooking lessons, henna parties and more.

"Attendees get a very authentic experience of the refugee community at this event," said **Allen Shaklan**, executive director of Refugee Family Services. "In addition to raising much-needed funds for the women and children of the refugee community, it offers a dynamic international learning experience that entices all the senses."

Attendees to the 2009 Taste the World may notice many of the restaurants featured are small ones that may not always receive the recognition they deserve for their cuisine. This event provides a key opportunity to sample food from some locally owned businesses that may not be well known in the community.

Atlanta is the fourth largest destination in the United States for international refugees seeking to rebuild their lives. More than 45,000 refugees have arrived in the past decade to Georgia, most in DeKalb County and metro-Atlanta. Refugee Family Services (RFS) is a metro Atlanta nonprofit organization that supports the efforts of refugee women and children to achieve self-sufficiency in the United States by providing education and economic opportunity.



Bagladesh Mirza shows off a plate of Firni, a Bangladeshi dessert.



Nigerian cuisine includes spinach flavored with different meats.



Mina Bestman displays a Nigerian dish, plantains with fish and rice.



The whole fried tilapia at Mina's Safari Lounge contains a blend of special seasonings.



Cafe Istanbul's popular beverage is the specially brewed tea.