

Marnita's Table 48th Birthday Celebration

Written by Alaina Lewis
Friday, 02 April 2010 15:11



Food for the soul... a statement that if applied correctly delivers the necessary comfort of blending one's appetites for indulgence with a satisfaction that pleasantly arrives when an emphasis is placed on social change and the celebration of diversity.

On Saturday March 20th, Marnita's Table Inc. and the North Community YMCA teamed up to host an event that through its dual purpose of serving the community, forged a single message to all in attendance: togetherness.

The event, which extended a hand to individuals of all ages and ethnic backgrounds, highlighted MTI creator Marnita Schroedl's 48th Birthday Bash as well as giving a platform for the North Community YMCA to showcase their newly renovated facility which works in concordance with the Youth and Teen Enrichment Center to administer community empowerment and a healthier way of living amongst its neighbors.

The event was catered by Kenwood Cafe' and like all MTI gatherings, a multitude of different foods specialized to accommodate all dietary needs were available in abundance, allowing guests their fill of eats and pleasant conversation. The party started at 3 pm, with aquatic sports for girls and women until 5. The evening continued with dinner, games, "girl fun," networking and a dance party in the gymnasium to top off the event.

Those who've attended MTI gatherings know that if the way to someone's heart is truly through one's stomach, then Marnita's Table Inc, is responsible for satisfying the hunger that resides in our social appetites. Founded five years ago, Martina's Table Inc serves the community,

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literally, with a unique approach of using our lust for food and togetherness to create necessary dialogue and social networking. Each gathering is designed to deliver a clever approach to promoting change and understanding between African Americans and other diverse cultures of people.

"Without the table I wouldn't have the confidence that allows me to reach out and make powerful connections. Now I have the tools to become successful," said Hannah Schubloom, a 20-year old-student at University of Minnesota, Morris, who for six years has been working side by side with Schroedl and her organization to lessen the gap between generations and races.

The non-profit organization, which hosts meals monthly, has brought a wide variety of topics to the table as well as served as a starting ground for young individuals who come to the meetings and learn the values of face-to-face communication, as opposed to social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter which disrupt the importance of seeking out hands on relationships. "I wouldn't be open to meeting new people, face to face, I'd be sitting at home on the web or playing video games. When I get older, I want to go into the business field, and in that field its imperative that you do a lot of networking. My involvement with Marnita's Table has prepared me because of the strong element of Social Networking that goes on with every meeting," said Brittany Williams. She is a member of Marnita's Tables Youth Advisement Board.

As a 16-year-old, Williams, like many of the other young employees who have found their way unto the MTI wing, she too is benefiting from the lasting affects that these meals and discussions will afford her by being given the opportunity to network and socialize in an adult environment. "A wise mind doesn't depend on your size. Marnita brings everyone to the table to sit down and talk, whether you're an adult or a child," she said.

Although, the idea of seeing the direct impact and resolve of discussions on issues like money, drugs, and/or alcohol might not be as timely as the results of an election poll, the benefits of working through the issues as a group and feeding all sides of the equation is as filling and enjoyable as the meals that are served. This is what keeps these diverse voices continually coming back for another plate of heart and soul.

Having served over 7,000 guests at over 140 different meals, Marnita's Table Inc. is bringing together our society, one plate at a time.

For more information please visit www.marnitastable.or