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**CUISINE OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA GALA**  
*Honoring Black Chefs and Hospitality Industry Leaders & Raising Scholarship Funds  
for Local Culinary Arts Students*

(Washington, DC) To kick off Black History Month, the Washington Informer Charities, Inc., DMV Black Restaurant Week and RockSolid Creative Food Group have partnered to launch “**Conversations & Cuisine of the African Diaspora,**” the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Awards Dinner & Scholarship Gala, at Washington, DC’s Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, January 31, 2020.

**Gala host and celebrity executive chef, Rahman “Rock” Harper**, founder of RockSolid Creative Food Group, is curating the three-course, African Diaspora-inspired dinner. He was the Season 3 (2007) winner of Hell’s Kitchen. **Chef Honorees** include: centenarian **Clifford Thomas, one of the first black chefs to work for the J.W. Marriott Hotel in Washington, D.C.** His early contributions pushed for diversity in the hospitality industry, particularly in corporate food management. **Chef Terrell Danley, General Manager, DC Central Kitchen**, for honoring and respecting diverse culinary traditions while exposing new generations to the culinary arts. **The gala is a fundraiser to establish scholarships for students graduating from the culinary programs at three Washington, D.C. high schools: Anacostia, Ballou, and Roosevelt and for students in culinary arts programs at Prince George’s Community College in Largo, MD.** Tickets are available on Eventbrite.com.

“This gala is to honor past and present black chefs by recognizing their achievements and demonstrating how their accomplishments remain important to the next generation,” says **DMV Black Restaurant Week Co-founders, Dr. Erinn Tucker, Chef Furard “Tate” Tate, and Andra “AJ” Johnson.** “We want current culinary students to be inspired and prepared for the next stages in their culinary careers.” Providing scholarships and mentorship opportunities in the industry for current black culinary students is a way to “uplift, encourage, and motivate them in a positive manner,” which is the mission of the Washington Informer Charities.

The gala will showcase top local black chefs and hospitality industry leaders to spark greater diversity/inclusion opportunities in the higher levels of the culinary world. According to census reports, in less than two decades, a majority of the U.S. population will trace their ancestry to Latin America, Asia and Africa rather than to Europe. African American chefs make up only 17%\* of head chefs in the industry. While diversity/inclusion are trending topics, this partnership is dedicated to developing a solid foundation that builds African American leadership and participation throughout the hospitality and culinary industries.

\*Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018

**ABOUT:**

**Washington Informer Charities** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that helps children and adults reach their fullest potential by providing opportunities to improve and strengthen their literacy skills. We establish and support programs that improve reading ability and expand overall access to learning.

**DMV Black Restaurant Week (DMVbrw)** is the brainchild of TEAJ (Tate, Erinn, and AJ). They bring their passion for entrepreneurship, hospitality, and education together to help businesses continue the legacy of dining in the region. The DMVbrw mission is to celebrate and support black hospitality, food, and beverage entrepreneurs and employees through awareness, professional development, access to external resources, and events.

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