

Dehkontee Artists Theatre Press Release, May 21, 2020



“Rabbi Gbaba Urges Patriotic Liberians to Get Actively Involved in Nation and Peace Building!”



The Executive Director of Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI), Dr. Joe Gbaba, has called on all patriotic Liberians at home and abroad to join forces with government and get actively involved in nation and peacebuilding. Dr. Gbaba made the appeal during his virtual talk show “Dehkontee Artists Theatre Kukatonon Peace Project” on Facebook, Wednesday, May 20, 2020. His podcast airs live every Wednesday from 3-4 p.m. U.S. Eastern Standard Time and at 7 p.m. Liberian time. The program focuses on African/Liberian history, culture, peace education and the dire need to teach Liberian genocide victims and survivors mediation skills. Dehkontee Artists Theatre also strives to connect diaspora Liberians and Africans with their brothers and sisters on the continent of Africa and across the globe through its cultural awareness and theatrical productions over the span of forty-six years.

The veteran Liberian American scholar discusses on his virtual show pertinent socio-cultural and political causes and issues that led to the Liberian Genocide. He also provides ways in which Liberians can move forward in reconciling their differences to forge a brighter future and homeland for all Liberians. Presenting his educational plan for post-genocide Liberians, Dr. Gbaba emphasized the need “to reconceptualize the Liberian curriculum to include historical information and facts about indigenous Liberians prior to the establishment of the modern Republic of Liberia...”



He argued that “the visible lack or scarcity of indigenous-centered cultural and historical materials in the Liberian curriculum and the ‘John Kizzle-type history books that hardly mention the roles indigenous Liberians played in the formation of the modern Republic of Liberia, as well as emphasis on Eurocentric history and culture, are some underlying and contributing factors that led to the Liberian genocide.” He also frowned on Liberians who are influential and wealthy but that prefer to use their influence and wealth to create havoc for the Liberian people. “It is against this backdrop that last year I organized three branches of Dehkontee Artists Theatre in Liberia in collaboration with patriotic college students from across the country so that we will work together to educate our people about our history and culture. We also want to let all Liberians know we are one people through our Kukatonon theoretical framework and philosophy” Dr. Gbaba bellowed.



Speaking further on the need for active involvement of patriotic citizens in peace and nation building, Dr. Gbaba stated that “It is selfish for Liberians of economic and social status “to sit and fold your hands while your motherland bleeds and yearns for your help. You do not have to like the President of Liberia to contribute to the development of Liberia. You do not have to be

President of Liberia to help your people either. It is selfish to think that way because by doing so you are sabotaging development in Liberia. You are creating economic and social hardships for the very people you would like to lead as their president should you be elected. Therefore, I urge all patriotic Liberians to take off their selfish cloaks and put on their patriotic garment to propel development and national unity in our genocide-stricken nation.”

The Dehkontee Artists Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia Gains More Momentum



In keeping to his promise to assist his homeland, Dr. Gbaba and members of the Kukatonon Peace and Reconciliation Initiative, Inc. (KPRI) launched the Dehkontee Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia on November 16th at the Providence Baptist Church Shrine in Monrovia and at the Harper City Hall in Maryland on November 22, 2019, respectively. The Dehkontee Kukatonon Peace Project consists of more than one hundred and forty-six college students in Liberia that signed up to serve as Peace Advocates in their communities and neighborhoods. The recruits received a rigorous two-and-a-half-month training in peace education, mediation and cultural awareness under the professorship of Dr. Gbaba. They successfully completed their course of study and received their certificates of achievement during their graduation programs last November. This year more than one hundred college students enrolled in the cohort II training that is presently ongoing, as the Dehkontee Artists Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia gains more momentum.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, DATI had planned to commence its national peace performance tour across Liberia, but that plan was put on hold due to national lockdown. Nevertheless, DATI administration established the DATI Covid-19 Stimulus Package to assist DATI Peace Advocates with food assistance and to distribute food to needy Liberians in slum communities in the nation’s capital, to them survive the global and deadly pandemic and to carry out public awareness campaign to buttress government of Liberia’s efforts to fight the Covid pandemic. Today, Thursday, May 21, 2020, the DATI Montserrado Chapter carried out food distributions in two slum communities in Monrovia (Doe Community and Claratown). According to DATI’s

Montserrado County Director Henry Garjay Brumskine, the food distributions and the conscientization of Liberians about the Covid-19 pandemic “was hectic but went well...”

DATI is a 501 ©(3) nonprofit organization in the United States of America. It is also duly registered as a nonprofit in the Republic of Liberia since 1992. Its Board of Directors in the United States is headed by Timothy Gardiner, an African American and in Liberia Mrs. D. Sheba Brown heads the Board of Directors. Honorable Herbie McCauley is the Chief Sponsor of Dehkontee Artists Theatre in Liberia. Since his appointment he has bonded with the youths and they have been working assiduously to promote peace in various neighborhoods and communities, including the distribution of food and essential health items to fight Covid-19 pandemic alongside the government of Liberia.

Dehkontee Artists Theatre is the longest surviving private nonprofit theatre organization in Liberia. It was founded in 1977 at the University of Liberia to promote African/Liberian culture and history, as well as to create national consciousness and Black solidarity among Liberians and all African descendants. The organization has four branches. DATI headquarters is presently in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A, while the other three branches are in Monrovia, Montserrado, Harper, Maryland, and Voinjama, Lofa Counties, respectively.

Published by Dehkontee Artists Theatre Public Relations Section

May 21, 2020