

Taste of Morocco gives 'Physicians' a flavorful boost

On June 13, Omar Boukhriss, 47, owner of Omar's Carriage House, filled The Boathouse at Waterside with the exotic sights, sounds, tastes and textures of Morocco.

At "A Taste of Morocco," patrons paid \$40 each to sip green tea, sample savory cuisine and more importantly, support the international work of Physicians for Peace.

"All the proceeds of this event will go directly toward funding overseas training missions in some of the poorest countries in the world," Boukhriss said.

"We were hoping for 70 guests, but there are over 100 people here," Chere Flowers, community engagement manager for the charity, said with a smile.

With the belief that "health is a basic need that transcends race, religion, politics and geography," the Norfolk-based charity provides medical education and training in developing nations throughout the world.

Physicians for Peace has sent hundreds of volunteer trainers to Africa, Asia, Central America, the Middle East and beyond. Their ranks include doctors, dentists, nurses and other health care professionals.

From the first time Boukhriss met Physicians for Peace founder, the late Dr. Charles E. Horton Sr., he was hooked on the nonprofit's mission.

"Sitting in the back corner of my restaurant, he told me: 'Omar, if you heal someone, you help one person. If you teach someone to heal, you help many,'" recounted Boukhriss.

"It's just like teaching a man to fish."

"People like Omar are the life blood of what we do," explained Ron Sconyers, the chief executive officer and a retired Air Force brigadier general.

"Dr. Horton was a visionary who saw more than a need. He saw a solution to the need. We are his legacy."

As a thunderstorm raged outside, guests stayed warm and dry sampling Boukhriss's culinary delights.

"If you have not traveled to Morocco, this food will take you there," said Carl Meredith, a Lafayette-Winona resident, as he dined on beef kabob, eggplant ratatouille and chicken pickled with lemon, almonds and olives.

Don't look for Boukhriss at his restaurant this week. He'll be in Morocco on a Physicians for Peace mission.

"I've watched Omar do more and more for the community and now he's taking that goodwill overseas," said Kate Mouak, the fifth generation of her family to graduate from Maury High School. "It's wonderful. He's wonderful."

"This event acts as a lesson to the community," added Karen Spencer, Mouak's mother and a teacher at Taylor Elementary School.

"Having been to Morocco twice, we can see the need. In Morocco, you either have everything or nothing."

Physicians for Peace and Omar Boukhriss are helping to level the playing field in Morocco and around the world.

For more information, www.physiciansforpeace.org [1] or (757) 625-7569

Gary Ruegsegger, gruegseg@gmail.com [2]

Source URL (retrieved on 06/25/2013 - 16:18): <http://hamptonroads.com/2013/06/taste-morocco-gives-physicians-flavorful-boost>

Links:

[1] <http://www.physiciansforpeace.org>

[2] <mailto:gruegseg@gmail.com>