



Photo by Caitlyn Laky / The Lasso

Soul food dinner honors traditional Southern, African-American cuisine

By AMBER GAUDET

TWU kicked off Black History Month with a little soul.

Wednesday, Feb. 6, was TWU's Soul Food Dinner, a celebration hosted by the office of Diversity, Inclusion and Outreach (DIO) to honor Black History Month. The event was held in the Student Union Underground from 4 to 8 p.m. and featured music, an informational booth and plenty of down-home cuisine.

DIO staff decorated the dining area with colorful tablecloths and custom-made balloons that read "Black History Month: Remembering the Past, Shaping the Future." A booth set up at the entrance to the Underground featured complimentary, BHM-themed wristbands and pencils, along with informational flyers and bookmarks.

Featured dishes at the event included smothered pork chops, mac 'n' cheese, southern green beans, vegetable jambalaya, peach cobbler and three types of cornbread.

Though "soul food" can be considered an ambiguous term in the culinary world, it has a storied past. Soul food originated in the Southern United States during slavery, when slaves were given only leftover cuts of meat

to make meals. As African-Americans traveled north during the Great Migration, this regional-ethnic cuisine began to take root nationally. Today, soul food restaurants can be found across America as many continue to celebrate the culture and flavors of this deep-South tradition.

Given soul food's rich history, organizers said that it was a natural choice for the event.

"[We chose it] to celebrate the black culture – and it's a tradition, too, we do it every year," Demarion Pace, student assistant for Diversity, Inclusion and Outreach, and senior general studies major, said.

Included in this annual tradition are the chefs of the Underground who said they look forward to special events like these that allow them to flex their creative muscles.

"I don't know if you've come to some of the events – like yesterday, we had the Year of the Pig, and we got to decorate a little bit more and do some more creative things," executive chef Kolton Broumley said. "That's whenever I let my kitchen supervisors add a little bit more feel to the food."

Sophomore psychology major Madison Hough emphasized the importance

of having events like these to African-Americans' struggle for equality.

"You know, some people will say 'where's White History Month,' but it's been so beneficial for white people for so long – let's have Black History Month, come on," Hough said.

Senior and dietetics major Faith Henderson, who attended last year's celebration, echoed statements from other attendees that, though this February's fare is a step up, turnout appears lower.

"The food is better... [but] there was a bigger turnout [last year]," Henderson said.

Pace, who also helped organize last year's celebratory dinner, agreed, attributing the dip in attendance to changing student demographics.

"I think previous years [there] has been a little bit more traffic, I would say," Pace said. "A lot of people commute so they might not even be here."

Regardless of crowd size, attendees were optimistic about the impact the festivity had on the TWU community.

"I think doing these celebrations keeps everybody included, and that's a good thing," junior biology major Yamikea Evans said.