



**Media release
Wednesday, 10 March 2010**

Multi-Nations Food Festival – the stomach, the best way to ethnic diversity

How to bring different ethnic cultures together to celebrate Race Relations Day - in one word, food.

With a very conservative estimate of over 50 nationalities represented in the region, Southland Multi-Nations faces the issue of presenting ethnic diversity in a manner that is palatable to more mainstream locals. The idea of an ethnic food court combined with cultural performance came from Violet Stewart, co-ordinator of Southland Multi-Nations, when the organisation was looking to do something different from last year's concert.

"Food breaks down cultural boundaries and most Southlander's experience of Japan, China and India is probably through the cafes and restaurants that sell food," said Mrs. Stewart.

The celebration will be held at the Southern Institute of Technology's Hansen Hall, Tay Street (behind First Church) on 20 March from 10am to 4pm with ten local ethnic restaurants and community organisations providing food to dine-in or take-away.

A wide selection of food will be available for sale at the stalls, from the curry, samosa, sushi and spring rolls of Asia to the quark, crepes and scrumptious cakes of Europe and our very own Maori hangi.

Food will be available from 10am with the colourful Chinese Lion dance signalling the official opening at 11.30am. Ethnic performances will follow on the half hour with performers from India, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Te Wharekura O Arowhenua, and Pacific Youth.

Food Festival MC and brand co-ordinator for Southland Spirit of a Nation, Gerry Forde, is delighted at the prospect of the event.

"Southland is one big family full of the colour and diversity of many ethnic groups and the best way to bring families together is round the dining table to celebrate," Mr Forde said.

The Southland Multi-Nations Food Festival is held on Saturday, 20 March at Hansen Hall, from 10am to 4pm with free entry and meals to dine-in or takeaway on sale (Eftpos is not available) and ethnic performances on stage will be held on the half hour from 11.30am to 2.30pm.

- Release Ends -

For photo and film opportunities prior to the event, please contact:

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