

***DATI Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia Gains African American Support!***



***Members of the Burlington, North Carolina Chapter of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity***

The Dehkontee Artists Theatre Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia is gaining African American as well as local support from Liberians. On Sunday, May 16th, DATI Peace Advocates chatted on zoom with members of Burlington North Carolina Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Chapter. The purpose of the zoom conference call was to provide DATI Peace Advocates in Liberia the opportunity to personally express their profound gratitude to Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity donors for their financial and moral supports.



***Rabbi Prince Joseph Tomoonh-Garlodeyh Gbaba, Sr., Ed. D.***

During the meeting, Dr. Gbaba seized the opportunity to thank the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity for supporting the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia. He personally thanked Mr. Kelvin Graves in person and William "Spoonie" Wilson in absentia for their initial personal donations. Rabbi Gbaba also expressed Special thanks and appreciation to Len Curington who has been the background scene man connecting DATI with the Kappas. Dr. Gbaba recalled his initial contact

with the Kappas forty years ago when he was a student at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.



*Members of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity: young men devoted to humanitarian work.*

"I met William "Spoonie" Wilson, Scott Girard Carter, and Len Curington when I pursued graduate study in Theatre at the prestigious UNC-G School of Theatre in the early 80s. These Kappa Frat brothers treated and respected me as their big brother on a campus whose student population at the time was 90% white. We were just a handful of Black students on campus and of that tiny Black population, I was one of several African students at UNC-G. Through help from Kappa Brothers I assimilated very well into campus and American life; and, with help from Scott Carter, Andre Minkins, T.K. Powell, Eric Riggins, Orlando Johnson, David Miller, Randall Lethers, Monte Hamer, Maurice Donnell and other African American students at UNC-G and NC A & T State University, I founded Dehkontee Artists on the campus of The University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 1982. Scott Carter, Andre Minkins, Keith Hill, Maurice Donnell, T.K. Powell and other black students from UNC-G and A&T acted in my thesis production entitled "Chains of Apartheid" at the Acock Auditorium. Since that time until now, the Kappas and I have maintained that brotherly relationship."



*DATI Montserrado Doughbor Chapter*

Almost all DATI's Peace Advocates who attended the zoom meeting on Sunday were born during the heat of the Liberian genocide. They are genocide survivors who have not had the opportunity to tell their war time stories and experiences about how they endured the hardships

of the Liberian genocide. Well, the zoom meeting with the Kappa Brothers provided a first-time golden opportunity for most of the youths to tell their genocide experiences to a very compassionate audience that listened very attentively.



*Honorable Timothy Gardiner, DATI's Board Chair*

DATI's Board Chair, Timothy Gardiner, who is also an African American, informed his compatriots that "Dr. Gbaba needs international support to help the aggrieved people of Liberia promote peace and reconciliation. There is a dire need for this project in Liberia. I had the opportunity to travel there and what I saw convinced me the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project may help to make a significant impact on the lives of all Liberians."

One of the female DATI Peace Advocates, Philomena Arkue, almost shed tears telling the Kappas her story:

"I was four years old when armed men snatched my father away from us. I cannot remember what he looked like except when I see a photo of him. The armed men spared my mother's life because she knew someone among the armed militia men. After my father's death, we felt insecure because of threat of life so we fled to nearby Ivory Coast to seek political refuge. Most times we stayed hungry during the day in the Ivory Coast because sometimes Ivorian security officers arrested and detained our mothers if they did not have their identification cards on them when they went out to hustle for food for us to eat. Often in the evening we would go to the market grounds to scavenge for food among the daily market garbage when the marketeers were gone home. Living in a strange land as a refugee was very difficult and painful. We did not feel free living in a strange land. Despite the long sufferings we endured, I was determined to seek my education so that I may be of help to my family and country someday. Today, I am a senior student studying Guidance Counseling at Tubman University and am enjoying the freedom of being in my own home once again. For this reason, I do not know what my future will be like if there is no peace and rule of law in Liberia. This is the reason I am committed to the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project because we do not want any more war in Liberia. I pray the Kappa

Alpha Psi Fraternity will not give up on us. We need your help to restore peace and rule of law in Liberia."



*DATI Maryland Gbenelue Chapter*

There was dead silence when Philomena narrated her story. It seemed there was no one else on the other end of the line. Suddenly, DATI's Executive Director broke the wall of silence and asked the Kappa Brothers in the middle of DATI's presentation, "Are you guys still on?"

"Yes, we are" the Kappas replied in unison. As humanitarians, they were just listening with deep interest to the stories about the sufferings the youths endured during the Liberian genocide.



*Stateswoman Philomena Arkue, Treasurer, DATI Genelue Chapter*

Hawa Guwor, another female DATI Peace Advocate, and National Assistant Secretary General of DATI, said she was very grateful to the Kappas for their donations "Because your continued support and donations will go a long way in helping us establish vocational programs for young Liberian girls to learn trades and to help them earn their own living. We also want to save our young Liberian girls from being forced into becoming prostitutes to survive. We don't want

young Liberian girls to be abused by men who take advantage of young innocent girls due to abject poverty in Liberia."



*Statesman Henry Garjay Brumskine, Director, DATI Montserrado Chapter*

Speaking on behalf of DATI Montserrado Dougbor Chapter, DATI's Montserrado and Grand Bassa Director Statesman Henry G. Brumskine provided the donors an overview of the project including the two-month intensive training DATI Peace Advocates take in peace studies, conflict resolution, and literacy before they are certificated and take oath to serve as Peace Advocates. He also briefed the Kappa Fraternal Brothers on the various peace activities DATI hopes to undertake, such as the establishment of peace and youth study centers around the country to:

1. Provide tutorials for school kids that may need help in various subject matters at the center, to help improve their academic performance;
2. Conduct peace education workshops for schoolteachers, community leaders, heads of families, and organizations, so they may be actively involved in peacebuilding process in Liberia;
3. Organize peace theatres in schools and communities, to actively engage Liberian youths and their families in building and maintaining peace and reconciliation among all Liberians;
4. Conduct national peace performance tours and town hall meetings to provide citizens civic education and live theatre productions and musicals that educate and entertain unlettered

Liberian citizens and electorate to help them know their constitutional rights and privileges as citizens of Liberia and to empower the ordinary citizens to make informed decisions at the polls.



*Stateswoman Hawa Promise Guwor, DATI's Assistant National Secretary General*

Further, Brumskine said: "Dehkontee Artists Kukatonon Peace Project provides a beacon of hope for all Liberian youths. It may provide us the opportunity to contribute towards the sustenance of democracy and rule of law as future leaders of Liberia. The project may also help to create job opportunities for some of us who have completed our studies from the state-run University of Liberia but cannot find employment due to lack of employment opportunities in our country. We are willing and prepared to promote peace in Liberia, but we need logistical supports such as office space, office supplies and equipment, and at least a twenty-four-seater van to travel around the country to promote peace and national unity. We have secured an office space and made initial payment for our national headquarters in Paynesville, Montserrado County. You will be notified of our official launching ceremony in a couple of months from today's date."

Meshach Sieh Elliott, Director of DATI Maryland Gbenelue Chapter, thanked the Kappa Brothers for their donations. He assured Kappa donors that "every brass copper that is sent to DATI to create cultural awareness and national consciousness among post-genocide Liberians will be used for its intended purposes."

## *DATI's Fund Drive and the African American Factor*



*Statesman Meshach Sieh Elliott, Director, DATI Gbenelue Chapter*

Dehkontee Artists Theatre and the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity ties date back forty years when Dr. Gbaba studied at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro in the early 80s. There he met some Kappa Brothers, William “Spoonie” Wilson, Scott Carter, Len Curington and many others. Scott, Keith Hill, Andre Minkins helped to recruit African American students to join Dehkontee Artists Theatre and to perform in Gbaba’s “Chains of Apartheid” at the Aycock Auditorium and to participate in the in the African Marketplace Section of the Greensboro Annual City Stage Event.

Also, the DATI-Kappa ties and Kappa Alpha Psi’s support of the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia are historic and Afrocentric in nature. One, it is a historical fact that Liberia was established by African Americans who left America in the early 19th century to establish the first Black modern republic in Africa. The founding fathers of Liberia loved their cultural heritage and they wanted to be a sovereign nation and people, to have self-rule. The western world doubted their ability to achieve their dream, but they pursued it with determination. Hence, it is not surprising that over one and a half centuries later, an African American fraternity is interested in the sustenance of peace, democracy and rule of law in Liberia, a nation that was founded by African Americans in 1847.

Dehkontee Artists Theatre launched a fund drive for the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia in March 2021 and established two DATI chapters in Montserrado and Maryland Counties, respectively. Interestingly, African Americans and members of the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity have donated the highest amount thus far. They are closely followed by Liberian citizens from Grand Kru County and subsequently, Grand Gedeh County. Final negotiations are underway to secure two buildings in Liberia to serve as our youth and peace study centers. The

organization needs One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) to cover administrative and operational costs to properly get the project started. Your generous donations will be of great relief to the people of Liberia, yea Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc.

You can donate by:

1. Cashapp: \$JosephGbaba
2. DATI's website: [www.dehkonteeartiststheatre.com](http://www.dehkonteeartiststheatre.com)
3. By U.S. Postal Service: P. O. Box 143, Clifton Heights, PA 19018

1. .com

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