

SUSLA, CITY OF SHREVEPORT TO CELEBRATE GRAND OPENING OF THE MILAM STREET KITCHEN INCUBATOR & COMMUNITY KITCHEN (MSKICK)

Southern University at Shreveport, La (SUSLA) in cooperation with the City of Shreveport, HUD and the Shreveport Housing Authority will host the grand opening of the Milam Street Kitchen Incubator and Community Kitchen (MSKICK). The event will take place Tuesday, August 27, 2019 at 10:00am. at 1210 Milam Street.

In 2016, with a \$1 million Choice Neighborhood Planning and Action Activity grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the City of Shreveport's Department of Community Development in cooperation with Shreveport Housing Authority began researching a project to help revitalize the Allendale and Ledbetter Heights community. With input from residents and extensive research, the MSKICK concept evolved. The project pays homage to the community's history of legendary restaurants fused with a need for health and wellness services. SUSLA Chancellor Dr. Rodney Ellis states, "We are excited about the opportunities that MSKICK will bring to the community. We are also extremely thankful to everyone who partnered with Southern University at Shreveport to make this project happen. Opening the Kitchen Incubator in the heart of Shreveport's Choice Neighborhood was the right decision and, we look forward to contributing to the economic restoration of this community."

MSKICK is a 5,000 square foot multi-purpose facility with an operations model comprised of two service divisions which include, the Kitchen Incubator and the Community Kitchen.

- **The Kitchen Incubator** will provide training and business mentorship to budding chefs, while also creating jobs that contribute to the economic base of the community. Entrepreneurs will have access to a commercial grade kitchen and will also become knowledgeable on how to apply for permits, package, price, and promote their products.
- **The Community Kitchen** will include the Community Café and the Culinary Medicine Center. The Community Café will offer consumers the opportunity to enjoy healthy, tasty meals while teaching hard and soft skills training to young adults who will work in various positions within the Café.

The Culinary Medicine Center, based on best practices from the Tulane School of Medicine's Teaching Kitchen Model, will deliver health and wellness services through culinary nutrition. Medical practitioners, medical students, and service providers will learn how to cook healthy meals and then, pass culinary advice on to their patients/clients. The program will include education on diet, nutrition, and preventive medicine. To foster community cohesion, residents will also learn how to put a healthy spin on classic meal favorites by participating in weekly cooking classes along side medical professionals.

MSKICK is a multi-level collaboration between founding partners SUSLA, the City of Shreveport, HUD, and Shreveport Housing Authority. The project has evolved from extensive input and research provided by The MSKICK Advisory Council as well as collaborating partners, MLK Health Center, LA Food Prize, and SRAC to name a few. Investment partners Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation is investing \$300,000 through a Collective Impact Grant to promote the health and wellness initiatives because of the benefits they have seen from programs that "...influence people to make small changes in healthy behavior that can build into lasting lifestyle habits...", says Foundation President Michael Tipton. Other partners such as the Housing Authority, The Parish of Caddo, LED, Capital One and Healthy Blue have invested in bringing the project to fruition.

Expected to be in attendance are: SU System President Dr. Ray L. Belton and members of SU System Board; City of Shreveport Mayor Adrian Perkins; representatives from the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); and a host of dignitaries and community friends.

The MSKICK project is managed by SUSLA CDC, Mr. Willie White, Chairman and Darrin Dixon, Executive Director. The CDC operates in cooperation with SUSLA's Division of Community and Workforce Development, Janice Sneed, Vice Chancellor.

For more information, visit MS-KICK on the web at: <http://www.susla.edu/page/ms-kick> or Contact Darrin Dixon at ddixon@susla.edu.

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Southern University at Shreveport, an institution within the Southern University System, seeks to provide a quality education for its students, while being committed to the total community. This institution prepares students for careers in technical and occupational fields; awards certificates and associate degrees as well as offerings and programs that are transferable to other colleges and universities. Dedicated to excellence in instruction and community service, this open enrollment institution promotes cultural diversity, provides developmental and continuing education, and seeks partnerships with business and industry.

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