

9th ANNUAL MAYA DAY- "CELEBRATING OUR IDENTITY" March 12th –March 24th 2013

A series of activities will be carried out for 13/☞ days prior to the Maya Day celebration; 13 days representing the different energy levels or gradations in the Sacred Maya Calendar.

"Flames of our Ancestors" - Torch Run & Motorcade, March 12th 2013

The Maya Day activities will commence with the Annual Torch Run and Motorcade which symbolizes the borrowing of the living fire from our great grandparents to reignite the desire for our existence as a people. A Maya spiritual ceremony will be held at the sacred temple of Nim Li Punit in Indian Creek Village where the torch will be lit. The torch is carried by community members from this Sacred site to Tumul K'in Center of Learning where the activity culminates with firework display, Fire Ball Game and a community traditional dance with live Marimba and Harp bands.

"Chajchaay" Sacred Maya Ball Game, March 23rd 2013

On Saturday, March 23rd, the spectacular and sacred Maya Ball Game- Chajchaay will be reenacted in Punta Gorda Town, Toledo commencing at 7:00pm. The Maya ballgame is inspired on the histories of our ancestors, based on the Cosmovision. The origin of this game can be found on the sacred book Popol Wuj which tells the stories of the mighty twins and how they defeated the Lords of Xibalba in the this game. Today, we can find some archeological evidences of this old game, like the jom (playground) located at Copan, Tikal, Lubaantuun' and other Maya temples.

"Cortez Dance", March 23rd and 24th 2013

The Spectacular Cortez Dance is an illustration of an Ancient Maya Dance. The Dance last for hours and takes 28 Dancers, including 4 young Maya females dancing to stunning sound of traditional Maya flute and drum. The Cortez Dancers includes Jaguars, monkey, Spanish soldiers, Maya Gods among others, all beautifully dressed in colorful costumes and masks. It dramatizes the early Colonization of the Ancient Maya by the Spaniards, demonstrating the strong resistance made by the Ancient Maya from the colonization of Hernan Cortez's invasion. The dance holds a strong spiritual ceremony as collective energies harmonizes the festival.

The Traditional Greasy Pole " Ta'kin' Che'" March 23rd and 24th 2013

The Ta'kin' Che', a part of our Maya Cultural Heritage, is an activity that needs to be revived. For generations, Mopan Maya elders share the symbolic importance of the sacred Nab'a' Tree, a rare tree used for incense by the Maya. Oral histories shares that the animals of the rainforest showed great reverence for this tree by bowing before it. In honor of this emblematic tree, the Mopan Maya have paid their respect and tribute to the Nab'a' Tree by practicing the Ta'kin' Che' ritual and use the Sa'yuk, another tree important to Maya. This activity is done jointly with the Cortez or Deer Dance since it requires that the animals(dancers) bow to the tree. This is essential in the cutting and erecting a 75 feet pole. This is symbolic to the Ancient Maya as way of demonstrating the coexistence with Mother Earth, their resilience and the many difficult obstacle of their struggle. The pole is greased with soap and lard and once erected, it challenges anyone who has the courage and skill to climb it. The one who successfully climbs the pole wins a token placed at the top. Throughout the ceremony, an elder beats a drum as Cortez Dancers serenade the tree, dancing around and jumping over the pole for a safe and successful ending.

The Grand Finale "Maya Day 2013," March 24th 2013

The series of events will conclude with the grand Maya Day on March 24th at Tumul K'in Center of Learning. The day's event will kick off at 9:00am with a Maya spiritual ceremony to give gratitude to our ancestors for the many blessings. On display will be Tumul K'in exhibitions, displays and information/demonstration booths (traditional medicine, arts, crafts, food, traditional agriculture, Maya language etc). The Cortez Dance, Maya Ball Game and Ta'kin' Che will be the highlight of the event. Competitions will be organized guaranteeing this event to be family oriented and fun filled. The competitions include marimba and harp dancing, best traditionally dressed, conch blowing, ground mole trapping, corn husking, corn shelling, corn grinding, only to name a few. Live marimba and harp music and the best traditional food and drink will be available throughout the day. Love FM and Ak' Kutan FM will do a live coverage on all the exciting activities throughout the day. Maya Day offers all the opportunity to experienced the living and authentic Maya culture.

