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IN CELEBRATION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH PHILADELPHIA AUTHOR LA BANKS PROMOTES LITERACY AND DIVERSITY AT THE 12 TRIBES COMPOUND SUMMIT

Philadelphia Folklore Project and Girls High to be beneficiaries of event

Verizon to serve as Title Sponsor of the 2009 Twelve Tribes Compound Summit

PHILADELPHIA - **The Twelve Tribes Compound Summit 2009** brings together multicultural readers and artists during Black History Month to celebrate literacy and education through the empowerment of reading and storytelling.

Two hundred people from all walks of life are coming to Philadelphia from all over the country, united in the ideals of promoting literacy and cultural understanding.

A VIP Reception held on Friday, February 13, 2009 at The Doubletree Hotel will kick off a weekend-long conference aimed at celebrating and raising funds for two community institutions, **The Philadelphia High School for Girls** and **The Philadelphia Folklore Project**, both of which have been long-standing community treasures that advance education, promote the empowerment of young women, respect and protect indigenous cultural forms of art, storytelling, and learning, and promote diversity, tolerance, and awareness. The following evening, Saturday, February 14, at The Philadelphia Clef Club, a special dinner theater event will be open to the general public. It will feature a spoken word performance by **award winning African American poet Sonia Sanchez**, plus **Shu Pui Cheung's Lion Dancers**, **Harold Smith on didgeridoo**, **Kulu Mele African Dance and Drum Ensemble**, **The MidEast Ensemble**, as well as music from **Layer 7**—a hip hop Goth rock band from Harrisburg, PA, with a special **surprise artist** performance.

“From the inspirational message of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to the musical history of the blues, to the multi-racial intergenerational vision valued in L.A. Banks’ books, Black History Month presents a tremendous opportunity for individuals and artists to share valuable life lessons with children and families in the community”, said James A. Reed, Director-External Affairs, Verizon Pennsylvania. “Verizon is proud to sponsor these events that will benefit youth in Philadelphia with valuable lessons to help them across the lifespan.”

The stories and themes that bind together the twelve books of Ms. Banks' **Vampire Huntress Legends** promote the core values of "do the right thing," diversity, tolerance, and thinking of the larger world community.

“The Philadelphia Folklore Project is pleased to join Girls High in being part of an evening featuring local traditional artists: Philadelphia musicians, dancers and performers from diverse cultural backgrounds whose work exemplifies the multicultural multi-racial intergenerational vision valued in L. A. Banks’ books,” said Debora Kodish, Folklore Project director. “PFP sees this as an opportunity to introduce new audiences to important local artists who actively preserve and develop significant world cultural traditions here and now in Philadelphia. We are grateful for the opportunity to make more real for people some of the traditions and heritage that have inspired Banks in her work.”

The Philadelphia Folklore Project (PFP) is a 22-year-old non-profit folk arts organization that works to sustain the folk arts of our communities, advocates to protect the rights of people to know and practice traditional and community-based arts, and affirms the human right to meaningful cultural expression. Annually, PFP offers **community projects** (public education in the folk arts including opportunities for more than 440 young people to study for free with master folk and traditional artists in a wide range of traditions, as well as exhibitions, community partnerships and programs), **services to artists and communities** (workshops, consultations and advocacy that help local artists sustain community traditions), and **resources** (publications and media, ethnographic research, and an archive on local Philadelphia folk cultures that actively document the creativity, artistry and experiences of diverse Philadelphians.)

The Verizon Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Verizon Communications, supports the advancement of literacy and K-12 education through its free educational Web site, Thinkfinity.org, and fosters awareness and prevention of domestic violence. Through the Verizon Volunteer Program, Verizon employees and retirees have volunteered more than 45,000 hours of community service to nonprofit organizations in Pennsylvania. For more information on the foundation, visit www.verizonfoundation.org.

For information about tickets, please visit: <http://www.neterutour.com/contact.html>