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Nonprofits launch Ghanaian experience commemorating 400-year anniversary of enslaved Africans coming to the New World

Charleston, S.C. – Project OKURASE, a Charleston nonprofit and Ghanaian-based nongovernmental organization, have curated the “Door of Return,” a 10-day cultural experience in Ghana for individuals and groups who want to connect with Ghanaian heritage and recognize the first enslaved Africans to arrive in the New World.

With a direct relationship between Charleston and the village of Okurase in Ghana, Project OKURASE’s leadership felt it was imperative to pay homage to the 400-year commemoration and to create an opportunity for connection, education and healing. The first trip will be available on October 7-18, 2019, with future trips being planned. Registration for this experience is open to the public, both domestically and internationally.

Four centuries ago, a ship arrived in what is now known as Virginia bearing human cargo. Thereafter, this trafficking became widely practiced for the purpose of slavery and became known as the transatlantic slave trade. In Ghana, many enslaved Africans were forcibly taken through a doorway, now known as “The Door of No Return,” and put on ships never to see their homeland or families again. Tens of thousands of those enslaved were brought to what is known today as Charleston, South Carolina.

In January 2019, Ghana’s president Nana Akufo-Addo designated 2019 as the “Year of Return,” to commemorate the resilience of Africans forced into slavery and to encourage their descendants to “come home.”

“We know of the extraordinary achievements and contributions they (Africans in the diaspora) made to the lives of the Americans, and it is important that this

symbolic year, 400 years later, we commemorate their existence and their sacrifices," he said in a statement last year.

Ida Taylor, a Project OKURASE board member visited Ghana 13 years ago. "This return experience will allow participants to connect with cultural heritage and the people of Ghana," she explained. "Coming home and connecting can have a healing impact and can help with the reconciliation of a painful past."

"This once-in-a-lifetime, hands-on experience will guide participants to personally connect with local chiefs, elders and Ghanaians including residents of the village of Okurase, where they will be welcomed home," shares Ginneh Slaughter, a trip facilitator with Project OKURASE.

For The Door of Return, Project OKURASE designed an itinerary that includes common Ghanaian activities such as a libation and welcome ceremony, healing ceremonies, African dance and drumming, and cooking workshops and more. Participants will arrive in Accra and travel to several villages and sites of key importance over the course of the journey.

The Door of Return experience is ideal for people of African descent who seek connection and healing through a real, nontourist experience. It is also appropriate for anyone who has an interest in African history, heritage, culture, the arts, or for those who want to contribute to Ghana's economy and culture through hands-on, community-based experiences.

Participants are responsible for their own passports, visas, immunizations, antimalaria medication and the flight to and from Ghana. For more details, pricing and registration, visit ghanadoorofreturn.com. Project OKURASE is open to considering other dates for any group interested in a separate experience outside of the preplanned dates.

Project OKURASE

Project OKURASE is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in the United States and an NGO based in the Ghanaian rural village of Okurase. The joint organizations are dedicated to creating collaborative, sustainable and integrated solutions to life's greatest challenges. Their focus is on health and nutrition, water and sanitation, education and technology, building and energy sources, economic self-sufficiency and cultural exchange. Visit projectokurase.org to learn more or follow Project OKURASE on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [YouTube](#).

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