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Media Contact:
Rena Koufaliotis
koufax4@gmail.com

38TH ANNUAL YIASOU GREEK FESTIVAL BRINGS THE CULTURE OF GREECE TO CHARLOTTE

CHARLOTTE, NC - The Yiasou Greek Festival returns to Charlotte with its 38th annual event on Sept. 10, 11, 12 and 13. One of Charlotte's most highly anticipated cultural events, it is hosted by the parishioners of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral and takes place on the church grounds at 600 East Blvd. The family friendly weekend features authentic Greek cuisine, homemade pastries, live traditional music and dancing as well as shopping and cultural exhibits.

The Yiasou Greek Festival received Charlotte Magazine's BOB (Best of the Best) Voters' Pick Award for Best Festival in 2013.

"The goal is to offer the culture of our community so that people learn more about the church and the Greek tradition," says John Tsumas, a Charlotte native and President of the Holy Trinity Parish Council.

Visitors can sample a variety of delicious Greek specialties, from gyros and spanakopita to roasted lamb and pastichio. Dessert alone is worth the trip; patrons can sip frappe or try homemade baklava and loukoumades, the popular honey-drizzled doughnuts. A drive-thru menu is accessible via Winthrop Avenue. Kid friendly menu options are also available.

Live entertainment is the centerpiece of the festival atmosphere and takes place on two outdoor stages. The main tent is filled with the sounds of the mandolin-like bouzouki, and dance performances are scheduled throughout the weekend. Traditional Greek folk dancing is presented by Holy Trinity's youth, ages 5 to 25, who dance, sing and play the instruments of their ancestral villages. New for 2015 are folk dance lessons, taught by Holy Trinity's award winning adult instructors. Check the festival website or visit the main stage for more information.

In addition to browsing a wide variety of specialty vendors selling everything from Greek art to jewelry and imported groceries, festival patrons can also enjoy Greek wine tasting or mingle with Spartan warriors in full armor. Members of the reenactment group "The Warriors of Greece" will be patrolling the festival grounds and are happy to pose for a souvenir photo. Chris Pangalos of the The Warriors of Greece will also offer entertaining talks on the military tradition of ancient Greece.

Visitors who prefer to get away from the outdoor festival buzz can step into the Cathedral for a choir performance (2:30, 3:00 and 3:30 Saturday only) or for a guided tour of its stunning Byzantine frescos and architecture. Built in 1954, the Cathedral is the vibrant center of the Holy Trinity community's religious life.

Younger patrons will enjoy the enhanced Children's Playland with rides, face painting and concessions.

Festival admission is \$3. Children 12 and under are free when accompanied by a parent or guardian. School groups and senior citizen groups can make arrangements for free admission by contacting the church office between 12:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. at 704-334-4771 by September 3.

For more information and a full list of festival attractions, schedules and menus, visit www.yiasoufestival.org.

