

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Historic Virginia Key Celebrates 70 Years of Community-Building and Reinvention

Special multimedia presentation to be shown on the festival main stage Saturday, February 21st

Miami, FL – February 10, 2015 – The Virginia Key GrassRoots Festival of Music, Art and Dance will celebrate the 70th anniversary of its host site and partner, the **Historic Virginia Key Beach Park**, on Saturday February 21st on the main-stage of the festival. A multi-media performance featuring incredible photographs that document the segregated history of the Historic Beach Park and its reclaimed power as a space for community building, will play to the sounds of local youth musicians at the peak of the festival weekend. The GrassRoots Festival recognizes the opportunity of acknowledging such a storied site in South Florida's history to encourage cultural exploration and learning.

The inherent lessons of the Historic Virginia Key Beach Park will be on display throughout the 2015 Virginia Key GrassRoots Festival, as their mission is to be a multi-cultural event supporting many traditions and bringing diverse communities together through the common language of music. The park opened in 1945 as a "colored only" beach and stands as a landmark of civic engagement in its current incarnation as a restored natural gem. Shuttered for years, the park reopened in 2008 and is now available to the public daily, for all to enjoy, where once it was the only beach in Miami-Dade County where African-Americans were welcome.

A recently redesigned and relaunched park website at virginiakeybeachpark.net details some of the many amenities available, including the vintage Allan Herschell carousel and operating miniature train, several covered pavilions and a wedding gazebo for rent, children's play areas, nature trails, camping sites, pristine beaches and more. The website also includes an informative historical timeline. The festival, which begins with the all new **Culture Camp** February 15-18, then continues with the musical portion of the festivities February 19-22, will take place at 4020 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami, FL 33149. The cost to attend each day of unlimited workshops is \$25 and includes dinner and a dance. Children under 12 are admitted free to all events. For more information about the festival, call [786.409.5261](tel:786.409.5261) or visit www.virginiakeygrassroots.org.

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ABOUT GRASSROOTS

The original **Finger Lakes GrassRoots Festival** began in 1990 as a benefit concert to support a local AIDS organization in Ithaca, NY. Encouraged by the success of that night, a decision was made to create an annual festival dedicated to raising money for the fight against AIDS, while supporting arts and education. With the help of countless volunteers, the Finger Lakes GrassRoots Festival has become an internationally-recognized event with a focus on traditional and contemporary roots music and dance from all over the world. For four days every July, the festival hosts more than 60 performing groups on four stages at the **Trumansburg Fairgrounds** in central New York, near the university town of Ithaca.

Twelve years later, the **Shakori Hills GrassRoots Festival** was launched on a 75-acre farm in rural North Carolina near the triangle cities of Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill. Twice a year, in April and October, thousands of people attend the event to revel in great music, sweat it out on the dance floor, celebrate the arts, and build community. The site has since become the **Shakori Hills Community Arts Center**, a non-profit organization created to strengthen the community through music, arts and education.

The festival is down south for the winter once again, having found an amazing site, the **Historic Virginia Key Beach Park**, just off the coast of Miami, FL. It's the ideal spot for the fourth annual **Virginia Key GrassRoots Festival**. For more information, navigate to virginiakeygrassroots.com call [786.409.5261](tel:786.409.5261).

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