



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fork & Fete: Dine the Delta with Chefs David Crews and Ms. Mary Johnson on Friday, September 9

Featuring elevated soul food from award-winning chefs and live music, the fundraising event benefits The MAX's Success Programs

MERIDIAN, Miss. (July 26, 2022) – Award-winning chefs David Crews and Mary Johnson of the Mississippi Delta will team up on Friday, September 9, to curate and prepare an incredible menu of upscale soul food paired with live music. The Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience (The MAX) is hosting the event to benefit The MAX Success Programs, designed to help high school students explore and excel at careers in the arts.



Crews is a well-known celebrity chef and the lead culinary instructor at Mississippi Delta Community College. Co-founder of The Delta Supper Club, Crews has also hosted private culinary events for celebrities such as Morgan Freeman, Herbie Hancock, Rosanne Cash, the late Justice Antonin Scalia, and PGA golfer Zach Johnson, among others. He won the title “King of American Seafood” in 2013 and now serves as a judge for the event. He’s become a fixture with the Southern Foodways Alliance and has received written endorsements by chefs such as John Currence, Simon Majumdar, John T. Edge, and Michelle Bernstein.

Teaming up with Crews is Chef Mary Johnson of Mary J’s Catering. Known for her artful soul food, Johnson says, “My love for cooking began as a child while helping my grandmother prepare food for others. It brings me so much joy to see others come together and enjoy the taste and presentation of the food I’ve worked hard to prepare.” After years of cooking for her husband, children, and grandchildren, Johnson attended Mississippi Delta Community College majoring in Culinary Arts, where she graduated in May 2022.

The evening will feature live music by Blue Mother Tupelo. Known for their southern soul and roots rock sound, the band plays festivals and venues all over the southeast. Americana music fans will be drawn to the group *Paste Magazine* calls “quite possibly the best husband-wife duo you’ve never heard of.”



Fork & Fete is the fall fundraiser benefiting The MAX Success Programs for high school students interested in pursuing careers in the arts. Industry professionals lead weeklong immersive programs instructing students on navigating their chosen creative field and improving their talents. The program is open to high school juniors and seniors nominated by their teachers, then selected by a committee. To date, The MAX has hosted Sound of Success, a music intensive, and Write for Success, a literary intensive. Participating students come from many different socioeconomic backgrounds; money raised by Fork & Fete will allow The MAX to continue offering this free program and expand into other art forms such as dance, theatre, studio arts, and more.

Fork & Fete will take place at The Citizens National Bank Courtyard at The MAX beginning at 6 pm on Friday, September 9. Advance tickets are \$45 per person for members and \$55 for non-members for general admission seating with a cash bar. VIP tables for eight people are \$1,500 and include an open bar, premier seating, and table service. Visit msarts.org or call (601) 581-1550 to purchase.

About The MAX

The Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience showcases Mississippi's creative legacies in one immersive museum experience. Visitors of all ages can explore the global impact of Mississippians on music, literature, art, entertainment, and cuisine. Discover the Mississippi roots of some of the world's biggest arts and entertainment icons – Elvis Presley, Oprah Winfrey, B.B. King, Faith Hill, Sela Ward, Margaret Walker, Eudora Welty, and Jim Henson, just to name a few.

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