

Press Release: New Group launched to focus on Indigenous Communities North of the Rabacca River.

On Saturday May 2nd, 2015, the Garifuna Indigenous People of St. Vincent and the Grenadines Incorporated (GIPSVG Inc.) held its official launch at the Friends of Crown Heights, Brooklyn, NY. The New York based organization was established on 07 February 2015 and legally incorporated on February 28, 2015 as a nonprofit Company under the Laws of United States. Their mission is to transform the indigenous communities north of the Rabacca River through the development of its people and the successful implementation of sustainable projects geared towards the revitalization, maintenance and preservation of the culture.



President of GIPSVG Inc., Ms. Marsena Ballantyne, in her address spoke frankly of her experience as an indigenous woman growing up in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, to be one that was sometimes humiliating. She stressed that “the indigenous people north of the Rabacca river have lived on the margins of Vincentian society for too long and there is still a lot to be done in eradicating the stigmas and ill perceptions of the indigenous people”. Ms. Ballantyne also spoke of the indigenous culture, its importance to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and called on her audience to realize its invaluable significance.



Members of GIPSVG



First Lady of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Mrs. Eloise Gonsalves also attended the event and took the opportunity to bring greetings and best wishes on behalf of Prime Minister Dr. Ralph E. Gonsalves. H.E. I .Rhonda King – Permanent Representative of St.

Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, and Mr. Jose Francisco Avila – Chair and Co-Founder of the Garifuna Coalition USA Inc. also made brief remarks.

The event saw cultural performances from Garifuna artiste Mr. James Lovell, Rolando ‘Chi Chi’ Sosa, Budari Dance Company, and Paula Castillo; Vincentian artiste Theo Homar and Wayne ‘Big Slice’ Commissiong also entertained the audience. The host for the night, GIPSVG Inc, closed the cultural session performing a medley of St. Vincent and the Grenadines folk songs.

GIPSVG Inc. currently comprised 26 members, most of whom were raised in the communities north of the Rabacca River and all residing in NY.

The event, which had an estimated 250 persons in attendance, ended with almost everyone taking to the dance floor. By all reports the launch of GIPSVG Inc. was deemed to be an incredible success