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**FROM CULTURAL AWARENESS TO CULTURAL SOLUTIONS –  
MFHA CELEBRATES 15 YEAR MILESTONE**

PROVIDENCE (April 11, 2012) – The Multicultural Foodservice & Hospitality Alliance (MFHA) is celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary throughout 2012 in grand fashion with a series of interactive and proprietary events across the United States. Officially established in April 1997 in Providence, RI, MFHA is the food and hospitality industry's premier multicultural training and advocacy organization.

Founded at a time when most organizations were not addressing the diversity message, Gerry Fernandez, president of MFHA, formed the group in order to focus on creating career opportunities for people of color in the industry and to raise awareness about diversity and inclusion practices.

When MFHA officially debuted, it launched with just 17 member companies. Since then, it has grown to consist of a powerful community comprised of more than 64 corporate members, including The Coca-Cola Company, Nation's Restaurant News, Darden, ECOLAB, McDonald's Corporation, Morrison Management Specialists, Sodexo, Yum! Brands, Inc. and many others.

MFHA has a long record of successfully educating, advocating for and connecting its members to effectively engage with multicultural employees, customers and communities.

Fernandez has been influential in aiding hundreds of companies in the quest to incorporate diverse talent management. Since MFHA's inception, he has spoken on such vital topics as cultural intelligence and multicultural talent development.

"We are so proud to have been a change agent for multicultural efforts in the food and hospitality industry during the last 15 years," said Fernandez. "We believe we have helped make a difference for generations of young people from diverse backgrounds who contemplate careers in our industry and hope to continue to do so for many years to come."

Roy Jackson, MFHA chair and central zone vice president of Coca-Cola Refreshments, said MFHA has done a lot for his company and the foodservice industry at large.

"The Coca-Cola Company has benefited in myriad ways since becoming involved with MFHA," he said. "I can't begin to guess where diversity efforts would stand if MFHA had never been created. The industry owes a big debt of gratitude to Gerry Fernandez."

MFHA's activities have evolved over time. Now it is shifting its attention toward solutions through cultural intelligence and cultural competency building.

To view a video presentation on Cultural Intelligence, go to [www.mfha.net/index.php/cultural-intelligence-video](http://www.mfha.net/index.php/cultural-intelligence-video). For more information on MFHA, go to [www.mfha.net](http://www.mfha.net).

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**The Multicultural Foodservice & Hospitality Alliance (MFHA)**

2012 marks The Multicultural Foodservice & Hospitality Alliance's (MFHA) 15<sup>th</sup> year of making the case for multicultural opportunities in the food and hospitality industry. The 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization educates, advocates for, and connects its members with opportunities to build their cultural intelligence in order to effectively engage multicultural employees, customers, and communities. For more information, visit [www.mfha.net](http://www.mfha.net).