



(For Immediate Release)

## **INARAJAN REVIVES 52-YEAR OLD COCONUT FESTIVAL IN TIME FOR VILLAGE FIESTA, MURAL UNVEILING**

(Tuesday, April 27, 2010; Tumon, Guam) In 1948, Monsignor Oscar Calvo organized the first Coconut Festival in Inarajan, an effort he believed would draw attention to the once dominant coconut crop that suffered major damage during the island's liberation in 1944.

The festival lasted only 6 years – with a brief revitalization in 1973 – despite Father Calvo's efforts to encourage people to go back to the soil, plant coconuts and again become exports of copra and other coconut products.

Now, more than half a century since its inception, the Historic Inalahan Foundation has revived the Coconut Festival, which kicks off Friday, April 30 at Gef Pa'go Cultural Village. The celebration coincides with this weekend's village fiesta in honor of St. Joseph the Worker, patron saint of Inarajan, and the "We Are Guam" mural unveiling.

"This weekend will be a historic celebration of culture for Inarajan," said GVB Deputy General Manager Ernie A. Galito. "Not only have the people in that village – along with the Historic Inalahan Foundation – revived a significant part of its history with the Coconut Festival, but they've also come together to produce a unique take on the mural project. We're excited about the community rolling up their sleeves and picking up brushes to pitch in toward this project."

Unlike other villages thus far, who've placed village murals on retaining walls, Inarajan has taken a different approach. There are no large walls within the village limits, so organizers decided to creatively paint scenes of daily life and families on boarded up windows and doors of abandoned homes, making each building an artist's canvas.

Artist Dr. Judy Flores has drawn the scenes as she remembered them in the 1950s and 1960s, when Inarajan was a bustling, lively community. Historic Inalahan Youth Coordinator Angie Taitague has gathered village youth to paint the scenes.

"Both of these projects – the Coconut Festival and the mural – have really drawn the people of Inarajan together," Flores said. "People have started painting their own houses, and it's really sparked the sharing of stories among grandmothers and grandfathers, great-grandparents, aunts and uncles, and all of the families' children."





Contestants vying for the Coconut Queen at this weekend's festival include Kamalen C. Meno, Liana Jo Palomo, Georgete A.M. Quidachay, Jennifer A. Takai, and Eden Diane D. Ikesakes.

For more information on the village's festivities, contact the Historic Inalahan Foundation at (671) 828-1671.

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