

SEEN & SCENE



Vicki and Maria Rivera.

PHOTOS: GORON RADNOR



Michael Parkinson and Lydia Widjaja.



Denny Lui-Wu and Stephan Carrato.



Roma Katwamdu, Sona Patil, and Priya Sheta.



Tareq and Ahmed Alkilaui.

All-world food and arts at FIT's International fest

STORY BY KAT REDNER Correspondent
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Live music filled the air and pumped up visitors at the 11th annual International Festival at Florida Institute of Technology's Melbourne campus, where colorful flags of various countries lined the sidewalk. The flags enhanced a beautiful entry and guided people to the numerous cultural displays featuring foods, arts and culture, traditional apparel, music and religion.

"FIT is such an integrative community," said Siquing Wang, a chemistry and STEM education student. "The students come from all different countries and I think it's important for the students to know about all of the different cultures."

It was a beautiful sight to see as representatives from nations all around the world filled the campus, working in harmony to proudly inform attendees about their home countries. "There's the nicest people from all

across the globe. I love how much pride the students take in their home countries," said Gary Hamme, vice president of Enrollment Management.

"It's our 11th annual and it's gotten much larger than from when we started," said Judith Brooke, director of International Student and Scholarship Services. "It's a really important event because it introduces the diversity of the university to the community and promotes inclusion which is a major part of Florida Tech."

In the Panther Plaza courtyard, vendors sold ethnic foods from countries all across the globe, ranging from Caribbean jerk chicken and pork to India's version of a smoothie, the mango lassi. To encourage them to try the various ethnic cuisines, Florida Tech students were offered free samples.

"The different varieties of food and the atmosphere of the event is just amazing," said Bindi Nagda, an Aerospace engineering student from Kisumu, Kenya, as he tasted the Indian cuisine.

There were also plenty of activities to keep children busy, including the bounce houses, inflatable obstacle

courses and games that filled the space on the back side of the outdoor Panthereum stage. Children were urged to participate in a travel-based scavenger hunt that encouraged them to learn about each of the exhibits. A visit to an exhibit earned a sticker for their passport booklets and, after filling their passports, they won a prize box of candies and goodies to enjoy.

Many Florida Tech students volunteered at the event; promoting a welcoming and informative atmosphere where all could share their cultural diversity.

"Global perspective; it's important to remind us that we live in a global village," said Robert Salonen, director of Global Business Development. "Sometimes you don't even know that the person teaching or learning next to you is from a different background and that's so important, especially coming from such a diverse campus."

At the end of the day, attendees came away realizing that no matter where people are from, our differences and cultural diversity together make us who we are, and that people from all across the world can live and work together in harmony. ■

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