

## DID YOU KNOW?



"Hunnuh mus' tek cyare da root fa heal da tree."

Gullah proverb says "One must take care of the root to heal the tree."

Gullah/Geechee is a cultural identity which springs from the collective roots and efforts of enslaved Africans brought to the Eastern shores of America from the Western coast of Africa. The Africans brought to these shores spoke different languages and could not communicate with each other. An intent of the European slavers. However, the ingenious innate creativity of these Africans allowed them to rise above this wicked plan, and they developed a new language made up of words from their different African languages, combined with elements of the English language. Their innate divine spirit allowed them to recognize the need for a National Consciousness in order to have any type of control over their own community (Community Control) even under the condition of enslavement, and this allowed them to establish and maintain a level of Peace amongst themselves. This National Consciousness is Gullah/ Geechee: A language similar to the Krio of Sierra Leone, and a way of living which has produced many generations of Africans in America all along the Eastern coast of America. Today this is called the Gullah/ Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor extending from Wilmington, North Carolina in the North to Jacksonville, Florida in the South.

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## Understanding's Legal Corner

In the state of South Carolina, the law defines a juvenile as anyone under the age of 17. However, the S.C. Supreme Court, following the U.S. Supreme Court, considers a juvenile as anyone under the age of 18. Explaining their rationale, the Courts stated that " the qualities that distinguish juveniles from adults do not disappear when an individual turns 18." The U.S. Supreme Court has affirmed that developmental differences in juveniles make them categorically less culpable than adults. Specifically, it cited their lack of maturity and impulsiveness, limited control over their environment, increased vulnerability to peer pressure, and unformed character. The Court has concluded that because of their developmental immaturity, impetuosity, and susceptibility to negative peer pressure, children who commit serious crimes are often less culpable than adults, which should be reflected in how they are sentenced to terms of imprisonment. And because these factors persist in young people generally, these considerations also apply to an 18-year-old youth.

Now what is ironic about this, is that despite these holdings by the U.S. and S.C. Supreme Courts about the psychological development of individuals 18 years old and younger, the state of S.C. has made it legal for 18-year-olds to purchase and own a handgun. On the one hand, 18-year-olds are categorically less culpable than adults, but on the other, they can buy and own a handgun. So if a youth on impulse or because of negative peer influence decides to shoot and kill someone with the gun they have bought or legally own, will the law hold them less culpable than an adult for their actions when it comes to what punishment they should receive for their actions? NO! ....

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## DID YOU KNOW?

...We as a people/ Nation must take care of the root from which we spring because it is from here where our greatest strength as a people flows. The root teaches us who we are, and defines our daily existence by the fruit which we bear. It is when we move away from and forget the root, that we begin to neglect the root, and this neglect will manifest in our daily thoughts, words, actions, and deeds as negative and unproductive behavior and actions. Trying to be/ live something other than our true nature, is the cause of much of the frustration, anger, hatred, confusion, delusion, and discord in our daily existence and interaction with each other. The Gullah/ Geechee people understood that communication rooted in one common cause (National Consciousness) is the path to controlling how our community exists and functions on a daily basis for the benefit of all in the community. This they did. Those of age remember how tight-knit this community was and how it moved as one. This was before we allowed outsiders and even insiders to change what it meant to be Gullah/ Geechee. We allowed them to change our teachings, which ultimately changed how we moved as a community/Nation and the direction in which we were moving.

We can all learn from the history of the Gullah/Geechee people, which many of us are descendants of. Remember how many moved to the North and West. The Gullah/Geechee people are us all. Let us learn from the legacy which they left us. Peace.



## Understanding's Legal Corner

...Much too often, especially in South Carolina, juveniles 18 and under, who have committed crimes, are being treated more harshly than adults. There is a disproportionate number of youth in South Carolina, black and brown in particular, who now find themselves in prison serving long sentences, such as life without parole, for crimes (first offense) that they committed as juveniles. They are not being given the consideration of being less culpable than adults. The majority of youth caught up in the criminal justice system for the first time can learn from their wrongs, and given the opportunity can achieve real rehabilitative change.

This is why organizations such as Just Move are necessary and vitally important to us. If we teach the babies are the greatest, but we do nothing while the powers that be gobble our youth up into their cesspool of imprisonment, we are the same as the powers that be. Just Move gives youth in South Carolina an opportunity to find change and the life lessons needed to ensure the longevity of that change. We will not reach all, but as long as we reach enough, we will be contributing to our future as a people/Nation. This is Community Control, and if we don't do it, we allow others outside our communities to control it and take us in whatever direction they choose. What we teach and do for our youth today, is what they will use to build and sustain the future, individually and collectively. **What future do you see? Peace.**