



Festival of Cultures Circular

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Festival of Cultures Celebrates 5 Years

By Debra Tuler

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On May 10, 2008, the Charlottesville Festival of Cultures will mark its fifth anniversary. We have grown and can confidently say that we are now here to stay!

So how did the Festival of Cultures begin? What is it all about? The festival began, as most things do, with an idea.

Our increasing diversity hit home when we realized we had a class at the Charlottesville City Schools Adult Education Program with 16 students from 16 different countries with 16 different languages. The richness and challenges of a diverse population were seeping into the schools, workplace, and the very fabric of daily life. But how much does each group know about the others?

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Charlottesville Festival of Cultures 2007

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT



The Festival of Cultures is grateful to have received a grant from Target in support of our mission and the production of the 2008 festival.

TARGET. The grant is part of ongoing efforts by Target to strengthen communities throughout the country by donating 5% of its income to causes such as ours.

The Festival of Cultures relies on the donations of those organizations and individuals who are devoted to the same ideals we promote when we celebrate diversity together each spring. There is no amount of time or money so small that it will not make a difference, and all donations are tax-deductible.

To find out how to show your support, contact Debra Tuler at 434-245-2819. You can also learn more and apply to volunteer on our website at

www.avenue.org/festivalofcultures.

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www.avenue.org/festivalofcultures

Thus, the purpose of the festival is multi-fold: to celebrate the cultural and linguistic diversity in our community; to increase awareness and understanding in a respectful environment; and to build a bridge of communication between newcomers and established residents. The Festival of Cultures is envisioned as a 'gathering place' where all can come together to celebrate, take pride in and share the many cultures and talents found here.

At the first festival, around 400 people attended, mostly students in our program and their families. Last May, there were over 2000 attendees—immigrants, refugees, other internationals, and many, many established residents and citizens. We have become a gathering place where everyone feels welcome.

With all-day entertainment, hands-on crafts, cultural exhibits, vendors, and agency information booths, this is truly a fun family event. Don't miss our 5th celebration!



Festival Co-Coordinators Heidi Gordon and Debra Tuler with the 2007 Diversity Quilt

Students Create Diversity Quilt

Quilting has a long and rich tradition around the world that crosses cultural, social and economic borders. Quilts are made to tell stories and the fabrics and designs one may see are as numerous and unique as each set of hands that worked on them.

Last year, students at the Adult Learning Center crafted squares for a Diversity Quilt using designs that evoke visions of their native countries. Each square was carefully stitched together to create a quilt that represents how each person's story, as different as they may be, joins with the others to create something rendered more beautiful as a whole because of its very different parts.

It was such a clear testament to the beauty of diversity that we have decided to make it a tradition. You can contribute to the 2008 quilt! Please bring any quilting supplies you wish to donate to the Adult Learning Center in the IX building, 935A 2nd St. SE.

Then enjoy the results at First Fridays in April, when the quilt squares will be on display at the IX building. The quilt will be shown and auctioned off at the 2008 festival and all proceeds benefit the Festival of Cultures. We will see you there!

We are looking for performers, artisans and vendors for the 2008 festival! Talented members of our community who have been trained in and continue to practice arts from their native countries are encouraged to contact us. Call Debra Tuler at 245-2819 or go to our website at www.avenue.org/festivalofcultures.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

TAYLOR RANDOLPH

A NATIVE CHARLOTTESVILLIAN WITH
A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

TAYLOR APPRECIATES HOW MUCH
CULTURAL DIVERSITY HAS GROWN IN
CHARLOTTESVILLE SINCE SHE WAS A
CHILD.

HER OWN CHILDREN HAD MUCH MORE
EXPOSURE TO IT THAN SHE DID GROWING
UP. SHE SEES THE FESTIVAL AS A WAY
TO CELEBRATE HOW MUCH CULTURAL
DIVERSITY ENRICHES OUR COMMUNITY.

THE FESTIVAL ALSO URGES US TO
RECOGNIZE THAT SOME PEOPLE ARE
WELCOMED INTO THE COMMUNITY FROM
HARDSHIP. THOSE STORIES ARE TOLD AT
THE FESTIVAL, WHICH IS IMPORTANT TO
TAYLOR. THAT'S WHAT HAS KEPT HER
COMING BACK FOR THE LAST 4 YEARS, SO
"THANKS, TAYLOR" FOR YOUR TIME AND
COMMITMENT.