



Festival of Cultures Circular

Volume 2, Issue 1

Organized by the Charlottesville City Schools Adult Learning Center

November 2008

Save the Date! May 9, 2009 6th Annual Festival of Cultures

Don't miss out on the only truly diverse event in town!

We've begun planning for the Festival of Cultures 2009! Get ready to pick up your passports and travel the world in Lee Park for a fun, family-friendly celebration of our many local cultures:

- ⇒ Music and dance performances all day
- ⇒ Storytelling
- ⇒ Cultural exhibits
- ⇒ Hands-on craft activities
- ⇒ Vendors, and
- ⇒ Service agency information booths

It takes many people to make this event happen:

Would you like to **volunteer** your energy and talents?

Would you like to offer cash or in-kind **sponsorship**?

Would you like to **perform or vend**?

If you answer "yes" to any of these questions or if you would like to learn more, contact Debra Tuler at 245-2819 or visit our website at

www.avenue.org/festivalofcultures

CULTURE SPOTLIGHT: SOMALI BANTU



The Somali Bantu arrived in Charlottesville as refugees in 2004. They came to the U.S. from refugee camps in Kenya, where Somali Bantu have lived since the early 1990's to escape violence in Somalia.

The Bantu are an ethnic minority in Somalia. They are a linguistically diverse group with a agricultural roots.

Violence and fighting were a part of daily life in Somalia since armed forces overthrew the government in 1991. Because of longstanding discrimination against the Bantu, they have been severely persecuted in this ongoing conflict.

In 2004, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) resettled 130 Somali Bantu. About half of them soon relocated to other states. The remaining families brought with them their culture and customs, including a vibrant style of dress and dance.

Note: the IRC is a non-profit which helps to bring the world's most vulnerable people out of conflict situations. IRC Charlottesville offers support and services to ensure that refugees in the community have the resources they need to reach self-sufficiency. Telephone 979-7772.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: IRENA SARIC



Irena realizes how much time and effort goes into organizing this kind of event as well as how much everything is appreciated by visitors.

In her view, the Festival of Cultures is a unique opportunity for the community to learn about people they see on a daily basis but never have the courage to talk to.

“What I like about the Festival is that it is an event where the American community is introduced to a world that is very similar, but yet different, which exists within the same parameters as their own. It is an honor to be able to help integrate the communities and give people a wonderful experience all around.”

Thank you, Irena, for your commitment and energy!



**Classical Indian Dancer
Festival of Cultures 2008**


ORGANIZER SPOTLIGHT:

The Festival of Cultures is organized by the Charlottesville City Schools Adult Education Program at the Adult Learning Center (ALC). The ALC provides educational services that lead to a GED for adults without a high school diploma, prepare for the changing workforce, and assist parents in helping their children succeed in school. ALC also provides English language instruction to non-native English speakers, with special emphasis on those in greatest need, assisting these students in developing their abilities to navigate within American society. The Adult Education Program empowers all students by providing them with tools and strategies for learning.

At any given time the ALC is serving 300 adults from Charlottesville and surrounding counties. For more information on the Adult Learning Center, visit our website at www.ccs.k12.va.us/programs/adult_education



Origami

The Charlottesville Festival of Cultures 2009 is generously sponsored by 

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