

The Cultural Diversity Network of Steele County

September/October 2004



Our Mission

To promote understanding and respect so residents of our communities may live together peacefully.

Our Vision

In this time of rapid social change, and with an increasingly diverse population, we seek to strengthen the network of intercultural human relationships and to try to keep Steele County peaceful, welcoming, trusting, and respectful.

CulturFest to feature Aztec art, local bands

Put on your walking shoes and join in the parade of nations that will again open The Cultural Diversity Network's sixth annual CulturFest outdoor festival on Sept. 25. All are invited to participate in the parade by marching behind the flag of the country you'd like to represent. It may be a country of your heritage, or that of a family member or neighbor. Simply be at Central Park in Owatonna around 10:30 a.m. to line up for the 11 a.m. parade.

Along with representatives from the Girl Scouts, this year's parade will be led by a troupe of Aztec dancers. After making your way with the parade to Washington School, check out the work of this year's featured artist, Patricia Mendoza. Currently an artist in residence at Wilson elementary school, her creations reflect Aztec history and art form. Mendoza will give a public performance at the festival at 11:30 a.m.

On the festival grounds you can also view the work of a variety of other multicultural artists, sample an array of ethnic foods, and enjoy performances of musicians and dancers from around the world. You may even see someone you know on stage, as this year's festival features performances by local groups. These bands will play and sing about peace and justice for people of all cultures.

"This is the time of the year to gather together to celebrate the diversity that makes us so rich," said Sue Schroeder, CulturFest chairperson. "It's also a great opportunity for children to learn about other cultures by participating in the very popular Passport program."

This year's Passport program includes 20 booths representing different countries. Children can travel from country to country getting passports stamped and experiencing the cultures that make us all so unique.

Festivities run from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m and are free to the public. However, donations are always appreciated to help us bring the event back each year. In case of inclement weather, CulturFest will be held at Wilson School.

If you're interested in carrying one of the 45 flags during the opening ceremonies, contact Mandy Young at mandy-fernbrook@ll.net or (507) 451-0268. For more information about CulturFest, visit www.culturfest.org.

View and discuss racially charged documentary at upcoming forum

What happens when a mayor writes an open letter to hundreds of Somali immigrants asking them to tell friends and relatives not to join them because the town's social services are stretched too thin?

Find out by viewing "The Letter," by Ziad Hamzeh, at the Sept. 28 Community Forum. The documentary, which chronicles the controversy started by a Lewiston, Maine, mayor in 2002, has received critical praise around the country, including the best documentary award at the Boston International Film Festival in June. Time for open discussion will follow the film.

Facilitated by Marcia Jacobs, Community Intersections discussions are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month at the Owatonna public library.

The facts about diversity

Myth: "America is being overrun by immigrants."

Fact: Less than one million immigrants arrive in the United States each year. Of these, 700,000 enter as lawful, permanent residents and another 100,000 to 150,000 enter legally as refugees or others fleeing persecution. Most legal immigrants, about 8 out of 11, come to join close family members. Undocumented immigrants constitute only 1 percent of the total U.S. population. Following are more facts about immigration:

- **The number of immigrants living in the United States remains relatively small as a percentage of the total population.** While the percentage of U.S. residents who are foreign-born is higher today than it was in 1970 (currently about 11 percent), it is still less than the 14.7 percent who were foreign-born in 1910.
- **The annual rate of legal immigration is low by historical measures.** Only 3 legal immigrants per 1,000 U.S. residents enter the United States each year, compared to 13 immigrants per 1,000 in 1913.
- **The 2000 Census found that 22 percent of U.S. counties lost population between 1990 and 2000.** Rather than "overrunning" America, immigrants tend to help revitalize demographically declining areas of the country, most notably urban centers.

Information from American Immigration Lawyers Association at www.aila.org.

How do you say that in...?

English

hello

goodbye

Spanish

hola

adios

Somali

hallow/iska waran

nabad-galyo

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