

## **What is the Charlottesville Festival of Cultures?**

The Charlottesville Festival of Cultures is a celebration of the linguistic and cultural diversity in our community. The Festival of Cultures serves to increase awareness of this diversity in a respectful environment and to provide an opportunity for building a bridge of communication between newcomers and established residents. The Festival of Cultures organizers envision the Festival as a 'gathering place' where all can come together to celebrate, take pride in, and share the multiple cultures found here.

Specifically, at the Festival, you can span the globe with an array of entertainment, cultural booths, information booths, hands-on crafts and activities, and vendors. It is a fun, free, family event.

## **How did the Festival of Cultures begin?**

The Festival of Cultures began, as most things do, with an idea and a realization. The idea was that new immigrants and refugees have both much to learn about our community and also much to share with our community. The realization was that many Charlottesvilleans did not recognize that their home town was also home to newcomers from so many different countries: Charlottesville is home to people from at least 30 nations. Over 50 different languages are spoken here.

Our first Festival took place in May of 2004 in Lee Park, downtown Charlottesville. Those who attended learned about and appreciated the vast diversity and common interests. People sang and danced together; children played together. Newcomers learned about services offered to them in the community; the Festival also satisfied an articulated need to give back to the community by sharing their culture and talents.

## **Who organizes the Festival of Cultures?**

The Festival is organized by the Charlottesville City Schools Adult Education Program.

## **Highlight of Festival Events:**

- ⇒ More than 20 countries/cultures represented – all members of the Charlottesville area community
- ⇒ Country/culture booths
- ⇒ Hands-on activities (ethnic crafts and games)
- ⇒ Local food and craft vendors
- ⇒ Live entertainment (music, song, and dance) all day
- ⇒ Storytelling
- ⇒ Resource agency information booths
- ⇒ Raffles with great prizes
- ⇒ Passports that can be stamped by each country booth you visit and learn about