

NUEYS-DC

ERI-DC Youth Profile

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North American Youth Sharpen their Leadership Skills

From February 16-18, 2007, Eritrean youth leaders from across the United States and Canada convened in Denver, Colorado for the annual NUEYS-NA Leadership Conference. As a part of NUEYS-NA's goal to develop strong, conscious and patriotic youth, the conference's objective was to provide Eritrean youth leaders with the personal and professional skills to become empowered leaders.



The conference opened with a reception attended by influential Eritrean and non-Eritrean members of the Colorado community.

The reception provided a venue for participants to share the work and mission of NUEYS-NA, and provided an opportunity to learn about available resources for youth and the greater Eritrean community.

Youth leaders then participated in two full days of workshops and interactive discussions on a range of critical topics, including empowerment through community organizing, leadership and leadership development, fundraising 101, the ABC's of grant writing, mission-based enterprise, economic empowerment, healthy youth development through community-based programming, strategic



planning and conflict resolution.

Participants also benefited greatly from one another. Despite the range of perspectives and backgrounds, the commitment to Eritrea, its Diaspora, and its future threaded through every person and every part of the conference. NUEYS-DC is proud to have participated in such a conference and looks forward to greater collaboration with its partner organizations across North America.

The National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students, Washington, DC Chapter is a non-profit organization with a mission to empower Eritrean youth.

For more information, contact NUEYS-DC at nueysdc@yahoo.com or visit us at www.nueysdc.org.

NUEYS-DC's Quarterly Newsletter

S'aat kindeyi alo? It's ELS Time!

When the Eritrean Language School began in January 2006, it set out to inspire in Eritrean youth a love and appreciation of their rich Eritrean identity by understanding its languages, culture and history. It is surely meeting that goal and more.

In the last three months, students having mastered the basics of Arabic and Tigrinya are actively putting their new found knowledge into use. Whether it is constructing sentences, telling time

or conversing, students are building on what they are learning day after day.

With the introduction of a monthly class solely dedicated to the history and culture of Eritrea, students are also deepening their general knowledge of Eritrean facts.



The benefits of ELS have been tremendous, not only for the development of Eritrean youth, but also for the community as a whole.

Let this year be a year of great heights and further accomplishment for ELS. It our foundation for the future.

Youth and Parents - How Do We Communicate?

On March 17, NUEYS-DC presented another event in the Personal Advancement Seminar Series called "Cracking the Code: Communication between Eritrean youth and Parents."

The event attracted around 50 adults and youth and produced a spirited discussion about current issues facing teens and how youth and parents can improve their communication.

The event began by separating parents and kids into two groups and giving them a similar set of guiding questions. The list included questions such as, "Which do you do better, listen or talk?" And "How do you think communication between you and your parents/kids could be improved?" After 45 minutes of thoughtful discussion, each side presented their answers to the combined group.

Professional counselor Emnet Kflu moderated the ensuing discussion covering topics like privacy, over-protectiveness,



dating, curfews, cultural and language barriers. The seminar provided a neutral environment for kids and adults to air their concerns and anonymously pose questions. The tone was frank and lively. The kids conveyed that communication is often difficult because their questions often devolve into fighting and yelling. Parents asked kids to recognize that they are still making adaptations to American culture and to be aware of limitations on time and money.

Despite the sensitive topics, the group was very open and honest. The youth's group commented that being compared to other kids was harmful to their self-esteem. Parents explained that by comparing them to other kids, they wanted to encourage their kids to have high goals. Parents also reminded their kids to stop comparing them to other parents.

Concrete suggestions were offered to bridge communication gaps, such as using a third party, like a sister or uncle, to moderate discussions. Another tip was to try talking while doing other activities, such as drawing or playing basketball. The entire group expressed determination that this constructive dialogue would continue

beyond the afternoon's event.

Emnet commenting on the discussion shared her observations: "Though I think our culture may be somewhat inhibitive, this is really needed. We can't afford not to talk about these things." One member of the youth agreed: "It was good to have a group discussion because it shows you are not the only one with these problems."

The afternoon was a opportunity for parents and kids improve their relationships and ultimately to strengthen the community as a whole.



The response was so positive, similar events on teen/parent issues are tentatively being planned on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Emnet's email address is kflu99@hotmail.com. Be on the lookout for more PASS events in the future!

Nakfa - A Symbol of Freedom & Steadfastness

At the end of a bumpy road in northern Eritrea, sitting high at the top of the Sahel mountains, is the historic city of Nakfa. With its magnificent views and temperate climate, the city's visual beauties are not what set it apart from other Eritrean cities, but something historic indeed.



March 23rd marked the 30th anniversary of the liberation of Nakfa. To honor the role it has played and its importance in Eritrean history, celebrations world-wide have been held to remember this great city.

During Eritrea's thirty-year struggle for independence, freedom fighters of the

Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) used the city as a base for their resistance against Ethiopian occupation. Nakfa suffered from repeated Ethiopian air raids, which bombarded and destroyed the entire city, except for the minaret of the city's now famous mosque (pictured below).



Nevertheless, the EPLF and the people of Nakfa and all of Eritrea persevered, eventually liberating the entire country on May 24, 1991. Nakfa is a symbol of the steadfastness and determination of the Eritrean people. It represents freedom. In its honor, the Eritrean currency is named Nakfa.

Today, in what was once a major battle-



ground, one finds a changed city with newly built schools, roads and hospitals, hotels. This bastion of freedom is flourishing with development and will stand as a rock for years to come.



Congratulations Nakfa!

YOUTH IN FOCUS

Gujile Bahli Warsai - Lighting up the Stage!

On March 3, 2007, Gujile Bahli Warsai (Warsai Cultural Troupe) captivated the audience at the International Women's Day Celebration, hosted by the DC chapter of the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW-DC). In their debut performance, this group of young Eritreans opened the festivities with zeal and showcased an impressive set of classic Eritrean music and dances. From start to finish, each member of Gujile Bahli Warsai energized the room with their solo and group performances of Tigryna and Tigre songs.



Hagos, Kubrom Kahsai, Makda Mehari, Selam Mengistu, Soliana Mengistu, Suzie Mengistu, Feven Solomon, Luwam Solomon, Yohannes Ogba, Fithawit Mulugetta and Yohana Tesfay.

The majority of them came to the U.S. from Eritrea within the past few years, and now live in various parts of the DC area. They are a diverse group of young people, with a love for music and performance that binds them together. Robel Tesfay, on behalf of the DC chapter of Youth-People's Front for Democracy and Justice (Y-PFDJ), had long wanted to organize young Eritreans and teach their Eritrean musical and



months of identifying interested youth, Robel brought these talented people

together and they have been diligently practicing every Saturday for the last 5 months.



When asked about the purpose of Gujile Bahli Warsai, Robel explained the importance of making sure Eritrean culture is preserved in the Diaspora and confirmed that the only way to do so is by educating and engaging youth. The young performers expressed similar views and were proud to share their skills and love of music with the community.

They are eagerly anticipating opportunities to perform at other functions. The young performers also stressed the need for continued support from the community in order to ensure that this generation, as well as those to come, is able to continue the legacy of Eritrean cultural traditions.

A quick look around the room found audience members with eyes wide-open and smiles stretched across their faces, as they were moved by the group's lively stage presence. So who is this group of vibrant Eritrean youth? Gujile Bahli Warsai is made up of 13 people including, Faniel Ghebru, Adam Hagos, Solomon

NUEYS-DC Braves the Ice . . . 2nd Year in a Row!

I cannot skate. I've lived most of my life in hot climates and so have never owned ice skates. Despite my predisposition for warmer climates, even I was looking forward to Sunday, January 28 when Eritrean youth came together for an ice skating social at Pentagon Row.



The event was organized by NUEYS-DC in order to give youth the opportunity to engage in recreational activities with other Eritrean youth. Families began arriving around 2 PM, many of whose children attended the NUEYS-DC Eritrean Language School. Soon enough, the rink was site to a veritable melee of different, brightly colored sweaters.

While some of the chaperones donned skates, I opted to keep my shoes on and watch the children from outside

the rink. Unfortunately, this position afforded me a rather stressful view: I watched with jaws clenched as children averted one potential accident after another. Slips and falls were inevitable but the tears that followed were soon eclipsed by laughter.

My vantage point outside the rink also granted me access to some heartwarming sights. Timid novices who at first refused to release the surrounding handrail, soon ventured into the center of the rink to test out new techniques, gaining in speed as they gained in confidence. Younger children steadied themselves with plastic buckets furnished by the rink to those who were too short to support themselves with the handrail. Siblings who had been bickering earlier were now helping one another. Older kids, so quick to ignore the less "mature" younger children,



were even quicker to hold their hands and coach them on how to position their feet.

By the end of the event at 5 PM, I and the rest of the onlookers were nearly frozen. Yet despite the blustering winter day, a good time was had by all. Although organized for children, I noticed how the event rekindled a flicker of childhood glee even amongst the chaperones and parents. I'm already looking forward to next year's skating social. Maybe then, I'll even skate.



~ Selam Kebrom

Pentagon Row Ice Skating Plaza
1201 S. Joyce St.
Arlington, VA 22202



NUEYS-DC

We're on the web!

www.nueysdc.org

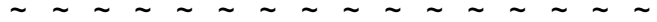
*United for a strong, conscious,
and patriotic youth!*



Just how “belih” are you??? Here’s some Eritrean trivia for you.

- 1 ~ What are the names of Eritrea’s two major port cities?
- 2 ~ What are Eritrea’s neighboring countries?
- 3 ~ What are the names of Eritrea’s six zobas?
- 4 ~ What monument was erected in Asmara after Independence to symbolize Eritrea’s struggle?
- 5 ~ What percentage of freedom fighters in Eritrea’s independence movement were women?

(Answers: 1. Massawa and Assab; 2. Sudan, Ethiopia and Djibouti; 3. Anseba, Dehub, Maekel, Gash Barka, Semenawi Keyih Bahri, Dehubawi Keyih Bahri; 4. Shida statue; 5. 30%)



YOGA ~ Stretch your Body, Stretch your Mind

On March 18 & 25, some of DC’s most skilled, up-and-coming instructors led NUEYS-DC members through intensive and invigorating yoga sessions at the ECCC.

Attracting newcomers and yoga gurus alike, the instructors challenged the limits of our physical and mental abilities, and showed us through carefully guided exercises the important continuum between the mind and the body.

The classes not only helped to strengthen our physiques, but also our bonds. Whether it was lending a helping hand or encouraging one another through difficult positions, we learned from one another. We became stronger together.



NUEYS-DC would like to thank all of the instructors who volunteered their expertise to share the benefits of yoga with the Eritrean community. Namaste.

ER Mix N’ Mingle Moves to Friday! Have You Heard?

ER Mix ‘N Mingle has found a new home on Friday nights. After a fun year of mingling events at hip lounges across the city on Thursday nights, N’ Mingle is now being held on Friday nights. This switch has worked well for Friday the soul-up was at George-town neighborhood.



The next ER Mix N’ Mingle will be held on Friday, April 6th at a location TBA. E-mail nueysdc@yahoo.com for more details.

A Thank You to our Sponsors!

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