

The Path Between

culture and news that connect us



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Thank you Sarah!

Culture Connect would like to thank Sarah Otto, our wonderful Education & Advocacy Program Coordinator for her one year of service as an AmeriCorps* VISTA. In her year of service, Sarah has developed and implemented programs that have already made an impact on hundreds of Atlantans.

We are fortunate to have her as a member of the Culture Connect family and happy to say that she will be staying on in her position as an AmeriCorps* VISTA for another year of service.

Thank you Sarah!

Cultural Spotlight

How much do you know about the Ameru dowry tradition of Kenya?

Welcome to The Path Between!

Join us in celebrating the diversity of Atlanta
at the third annual

MEET THE WORLD IN ATLANTA®

Enjoy an evening of international cuisine, wine,
trivia, and silent auction.

Date: March 26, 2011

Time: 6:00-10:00pm

Location: The Defoor Centre

[Click here](#) to purchase tickets or donate

Culture Connect Program Highlights

The Go-Between® Mentoring Program celebrated National Mentoring Month by holding the third annual program party for mentors and mentees on Saturday, January 29th! Mentors and mentees played get-to-know-you games, bowled with lots of spares and strikes, wrote letters of appreciation to one another, enjoyed pizza and cupcakes, and were awarded with certificates of appreciation! The program has grown to include over twenty matches and continues to expand each and every month, providing 1st and 2nd generation immigrant youth with positive role models from similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Culture Connect would like to thank everyone that came out for the event as well as Nirmal

The Ameru are a tribe situated in Meru, Kenya, East Africa. They live in the north eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya. One of the most interesting traditions of the Ameru is the *dowry tradition*. Dowry, also known as bride-price, is a process involving shared gifts between the bride and bridegroom's family through payment of in-kind gifts. The groom's family pays for the bride to show appreciation to her family for raising her.

In Ameru traditions, once the courtship process has taken place between a couple and they decide to get married, payment of the dowry is initiated. The dowry establishes a closer relationships between the families and communities involved. Dowry among the Ameru consists of five items: "mwaati" which is an ewe; "ntegori" which is comprised of kyempe, also known as drum of honey; "kabuti ka mukuru", also known as father's coat/suit; "muringiti jwa mwekoro", also known as a mother's blanket; and "ruracio" that represent five cows, the most significant of which is called "mwari wa ndugu".

The dowry is shared by the in-laws, and all items have a symbolic meaning; Mwaati signifies the purity of the woman, and is given by bridegroom's family to mean that the woman has been accepted into that family and her family is in consent. With the giving of the mwaati, the marriage can proceed and the rest of the dowry can be paid later. Ntegori signifies that the families are in union and have built a strong and close relationship. Ruracio (mwari wa ndugu) is significant because it shows the relationship continues. The bride's family will take care of that cow and if it gives birth to a female cow, the bride's family will return it to the groom's family. Dowry is a never ending process, a sign of love, respect, and union for both families.

The Ameru in America, refer to themselves as Amerucans! They

Sahadev and Erin Sonderman for their photography skills.



[Click here](#) to learn more about The Go-Betweeners® Mentoring Program.

Culture Connect is pleased to announce the 2011 schedule for the upcoming Culturesmart Medical Interpreter trainings.

- April Session: April 16th, 23rd, & 30th and May 7th, 14th, & 21st
- July Session: July 16th, 23rd, & 30th and August 6th, 13th, and 20th
- October Session: October 19th; November 5th, 12th, 19th, & 26th; and December 3rd

Each of these sessions will be taking place at Piedmont Hospital. There is a 25 participant limit for each class. To qualify for this course, participants must have

are a product of the Ameru culture and American culture. Living in a different culture means a different lifestyle, but this does not mean the dowry tradition is obliterated. The Ameru have simply modified the dowry expectations and instead of the five items, they request the cash amount equivalent to the traditional dowry, or other gifts of jewelry and household items. With the change of environment comes a change of expectations but the symbolism still remains the same – a continuing life-long relationship of both families.

A special thank you to Doris Mukangu, Culture Connect Swahili interpreter and African Women Health, Education & Empowerment Center, for sharing the Ameru culture with us!

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previous, extensive interpreting experience in a medical setting and must be able to read and write in their target language. To learn more about Culturesmart and any of our upcoming sessions, contact the Education & Advocacy Coordinator at: (404) 292-8457 ext.5# or program.coordinator@cultureconnectinc.org

Culture Connect would like to thank all of the participants of the "Being & Using Interpreters" training on Friday, February 4th. Culture Connect facilitated a training for interpreters, case managers, and representatives of local resettlement agencies such as World Relief, Catholic Charities, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Refugee Resettlement & Immigration Services of Atlanta (RRISA), and Lutheran Services of Georgia on this very important topic. Participants learned about federal laws protecting language access rights, the code of ethics that all interpreters must follow, best practices for interpreters, how to coach someone to serve as an interpreter, and how to work through difficult interpretation dilemmas. If you would like to learn more about how your organization can receive a similar training on interpretation or cultural competency, please contact the Education & Advocacy Coordinator at (404) 292-8457 ext.5# or program.coordinator@cultureconnectinc.org

In The News

Immigration has taken top billing in Georgia with the rise of anti-immigrant legislation in both the house and senate during the opening months of 2011.

House Bill 72, sponsored by Rep. James Mills (R-Gainesville), which sought to make Georgia's driving test English only, was tabled last Wednesday, February 9th! Thank you to all of those who helped to stop this bill.

The first hearing of HB 59, the "Destroying the DREAMS bill" that would ban undocumented students in GA from access to public higher education, will be held today (February 15th) at the Coverdell Legislative Office Building across from the Capitol building from 3:00pm-6:00pm.

[Click here](#) to learn more about this bill.

A Georgia House Judicial Non-Civil Committee held the final day of public testimony on the the

"Show Me Your Papers" Arizona style copycat bill, HB 87, last Friday (February 11th). This bill will lead to racial profiling and have tremendous consequences on the Georgia economy. To stay up to date on the progress of this bill, follow [Culture Connect's Facebook Page](#). To learn more about this bill [click here](#).

Make your voice heard on these issues by [contacting your representatives today!](#)

[Unsubscribe](#) alexis.dalmat@cultureconnectinc.org from this list.

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