

## ***A four-day event for families with Ethiopian Heritage***

***The Ethiopian Heritage & Culture Camp 2011***, a four-day Camp, will be held from Thursday 2:00pm, July 21st, through noon on Sunday, July 24<sup>th</sup>. Families have the option to attend either the entire Camp or come for the Saturday activities only. The location for this year's Camp is Massanetta Springs Camp and Conference Center, a beautiful setting in the Shenandoah Mountains, just a short two-hour drive from Washington DC or Baltimore, MD.

The Heritage and Culture Camp is the ONLY Ethiopian camp dedicated to bringing together ALL families who are raising Ethiopian-American children, whether adopted or biological. The participants and families come in all "shapes and sizes". Many families come with children spanning infancy through college-age. Others, new or prospective parents and grand-parents are also welcomed.

According to organizers, the goal of The Heritage and Cultural Camp ([www.heritageandculturecamp.org](http://www.heritageandculturecamp.org)) is to keep kids connected to their heritage so that they are well rounded individuals with a positive self image and a greater sense of community with their peers. In addition, there is a commitment to creating support groups by bringing together parents of Ethiopian children to share their great common goal of raising self-assured and well-adjusted Ethiopian-Americans. It will be an invaluable opportunity for Ethiopian children to reconnect with their roots. The Heritage and Culture camp is a family event designed to be enlightening to parents, as well as fun and educational for kids.

This year four-day long camp will have lots of fun activities, while offering educational and self-improvement opportunities for everybody. Families are encouraged to take advantage of all the activities available - all are age-appropriate and will appeal to parents, as well as youngsters. In addition to language and cultural awareness classes, there will also be seminars and conferences designed to help parents in raising children in a multicultural environment. Seminars provide longer sessions allowing for plenty of time for Q&A or further discussion among participants.

There will also be programs for the entire family - such as singing, dancing (Eskista), camp fire, a special movie, and group meals. By popular request, both the Gebeya (market) and the outdoor Ethiopian coffee ceremony have been expanded. The program has built-in free time for exploring great outdoor activities, such as canoe rides, volleyball, swimming, etc., or just relaxing with family and friends.

Saturday evening is set aside for ever popular Ethiopian banquet with traditional music & dance, featuring professional Ethiopian dancers and musicians.

Robust participation is expected from the Ethiopian-American community. Mekdes Bekele, the Founder and Director of the Camp said "The community has embraced this camp and we have already seen a high level of registrations already. As in previous years, our families are coming from all over; thus far we have families registered from as far as Belgium, Washington State, Georgia, Illinois, Arizona, New York, New Jersey as well as the surrounding DC/MD/VA area"

The camp package price includes three nights select accommodations, all meals (Thursday Dinner to Sunday lunch including the Ethiopian Banquet music/Dance show) and all programs (seminars/workshops/activities) as well as childcare. It is free for infants up to one year old.

Individuals and organizations seeking information about the Ethiopian Heritage & Culture Camp 2011 may visit [www.heritageandculturecamp.org](http://www.heritageandculturecamp.org) or contact the organizers at 800.775.1797

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