



WHY A CELEBRATION OF CULTURES?

The idea for Celebration of Cultures grew out of the mission of Scarritt-Bennett Center. We are a conference and continuing education center, dedicated to learning and to facilitating dialogue and cooperation across the fractures and walls that too often divide us by race, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, and political preferences. The Center houses a multicultural museum—The Cultural Museum—whose artifacts collected from countries around the world provide us the means and the mandate to be involved in cross-cultural education. Our mission calls us to eradicate racism, to build a global community, and to use the resources with which we have been entrusted to fulfill this mission. Our predecessor institution, Scarritt College, enrolled and graduated American black students in 1952. We have been on the forefront of working for positive change in eliminating racism and creating an inclusive community.

So the Celebration of Cultures is our offering to Middle Tennessee to celebrate our joyful living in the midst of the many cultures that comprise our home. Our purpose is serious, even though we intend for the event to be fun, educational, and inspiring. We have overwhelming evidence of the hatred and mistrust that is dividing us as a nation and as a community. This event stands as evidence of our commitments to understanding and to welcoming the stranger.

We have invited you to join us in witnessing to that other way. We will celebrate together in music, dancing, games, exhibits and demonstrations the rich variety of cultures that are present in this community. We want people of all ages to have the opportunity to share an experience that is multicultural and educational and fun. The children's area will provide games, demonstrations, entertainment, and hands-on learning experiences. The entertainment will offer dancers, singers and musicians. Demonstrations and exhibits and educational moments will provide ample opportunity for learning and growing. We will look into each other's eyes and see friendship looking back.

We continue to find an enthusiastic response in the various communities we have invited to participate. More join us each year. This Celebration brings people together to share their cultural heritages and learn about others. We are excited about this ninth Celebration of Cultures and welcome you to this endeavor. May it be a joyful celebration for you and the communities you represent.

Carolyn Henninger Oehler,
Executive Director