



THE DAILY GLEANER/DAVID SMITH PHOTO
CULTURE FAIR: Many cultures were on display Wednesday at the Boyce Farmers' Market during the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The event was organized by the Multicultural Association of Fredericton. Above, belly dancer Stacey Macklem entertains the crowd.

Groups gather to promote racial harmony

By JENNIFER DUNVILLE
 durville.jennifer@dailygleaner.com

A diverse group of Fredericton residents helped kick off the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination at the Boyce Farmers' Market on Wednesday.

The event was hosted by the Fredericton Multicultural Association and featured talent from countries around the world.

"This annual event is to bring a variety of cultures together to stop racism and create a welcoming community," said Haruka Kudo, spokeswoman for the association. "By celebrating together, it's our hope that we can all develop an understanding and respect for each other."

The annual festival was open to variety of cultural groups, including the

Fredericton Islamic, Latino, and African associations.

Twenty-one exhibitors displayed crafts, costumes, ethnic food and provided information about religions and cultures.

Entertainment included Indian, Chinese and Irish dance, as well as Spanish, Egyptian and African music.

"In co-operation with local schools, we held an anti-racism art contest as part of the festival as well," Kudo said.

"We're a diverse province and this festival is one of the best ways to bring people together and see diversity in action."

Shara Golden
 Human Rights Commission of New Brunswick

"We just tried to find as many ways as possible to spread our anti-racism message."

Shara Golden, of the Human Rights Commission of New Brunswick, said celebrating the International

Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is important.

She said racism is a problem in the province and needs all the attention it can get.

"It's important to provide an opportunity for people to just stop and think about racism," Golden said. "We're a diverse province and this festival is one of the best ways to bring people together and see diversity in action."

Golden said she decided to participate in the festival as a guest speaker because she wanted to send a message.

"We have about 15 reported cases of racial discrimination each year," Golden said. "We've been trying to stop racism since the Human Rights Act in 1957, so it shouldn't still be happening. Obviously we need to continue to hold events like this and talk about it."

Hundreds of people attended Wednesday's festival.

Kudo said her goal was to reach as many people as possible, so the festival was a success.

"It's encouraging to see so many people take an interest," she said. "It means we're on the right track and on our way to eliminating racism one and for all."

The Daily Gleaner, March 22 2007