

AMAKOLO

A RITES-OF-PASSAGE PROGRAM FOR AFRICAN GIRLS

Fact Sheet

Purpose: The AMAKOLO Rites-of-Passage program is a component of MAWA's African Girls' Initiative for Leadership & Empowerment that emphasizes the cultural awareness and self-development of older African Immigrant and refugee girls. It is an expanded replica of the African cultural practice of marking young people's entry into adulthood by providing them with the skills and knowledge they need to be successful, independent and responsible. Amakolo does this through: goal setting, career exploration, health and physical development promotion, encouraging positive relationships, building self-esteem, promoting academic advancement and an understanding of their African cultures and providing mentors/ positive role models to help the girls make a successful transition to womanhood.

Class Size: Each "kolo" has 12-15 young ladies meeting for 40 hours over a 4-month period.

Selection Process: Applications are available on our website: www.mawanet.org and in our office. Eligible applicants between ages 17-21 years old should submit their applications **no later than February 28**. A committee of African elders and parents will make the selection. Participants, parents, and mentors will be invited to an orientation and the program will run from March to June 2005.

Schedule: There will be a combination of Saturday programs, and one on one mentoring with African "aunties" and "big sisters". Sessions will be held every other Saturday 10:00am-4:00pm; venue to be announced.

- **Seminars:** provide information on African culture and values, womanhood, adult living, health & wellness, planning, financing, preparing for college, accessing community and educational resources, and career exploration.
- **Group Activities:** will be geared towards promoting solidarity, cultural pride, and a sense of community. Activities will celebrate African culture and art, promote community involvement through volunteering, and prepare participants for the coming-of-age celebration through African dance, song, art & crafts. "Aunties" and participants will also work on common projects.
- **Passage Retreat:** A weekend retreat where girls and their staff and mentors take a break from the fast pace of city life and put the final touches to their 40-hour program. They will also finalize plans for the coming-of-age celebration.
- **Grand Amakolo Coming-of-Age Ball:** A celebration and recognition ceremony in which participants are presented to their communities and supporters as viable African women.

Cost: There is no financial cost to participants. All accepted participants are required to fully commit and participate in all program activities.

Rewards: New skills, a sense of purpose and direction, positive adult role models, invaluable insights into African culture, assistance on college and career goals, and readiness for adulthood.

Criteria for Candidates:

1. Attend high school or college in Hennepin or Ramsey County
2. Be 17-21 year-old African immigrant or refugee girl
3. Demonstrate potential for academic advancement
4. Unmarried
5. Commit to **100% participation in all** activities

For more information, please call Paricia Dawa-Charity at (612)-302-3400 ext.109 at Minnesota African Women's Association, MAWA. ALL APPLICANTS WILL BE NOTIFIED IN WRITING OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEE'S DECISION.