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## Local News

## Economic justice awaits newcomers

Posted: Jan 16, 2012, 11:03 am

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By Jay Furst

The Post-Bulletin, Rochester MN

Immigrants to America don't come here for a handout — they come for a piece of the dream, says the executive director of a Twin Cities-based economic development center for the African community in Minnesota.

"No immigrant, no matter where from, comes to the United States to rely on the government," Hussein Samatar said at the annual "We Have a Dream" breakfast in Rochester this morning. "They come here to rely on faith and family" and hard work to improve their lives, he said, and that path is easier because of the work of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

Samatar, who came to Minnesota from Somalia in the early 1990s, was the featured speaker at the 17th annual community breakfast, which opened a day-long celebration of King's birthday. More than 350 people attended the event at the Rochester International Event Center, presented by the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce.

Samatar, who has an MBA from the University of St. Thomas and worked in commercial lending for Wells Fargo, founded the nonprofit [African Development Center](#) in Minneapolis eight years ago, "to start and sustain businesses, build wealth and promote community reinvestment" in Minnesota, according to its mission statement. The organization now has offices in Rochester and Willmar, Minn., as well.

Samatar, who described King as "the best human being the United States has ever produced," said immigrants like himself "did not have to deal with the civil rights issues" that King and others confronted in the 1960s. "That war had been fought by 1993," when he came to Minnesota. The on-going battle is for economic justice, and helping all Americans to lead achieve their dreams.

Earlier in the program, Chamber President John Wade called attention to the wide disparity in high school graduation rates for white, black and Hispanic students in Rochester. Samatar picked up on that theme and said that currently, "we are leaving a lot of children, especially black boys, behind," and the United States can't compete with China and the rest of the world without everyone participating.

"This country is all-for-one," he said. The challenge is to "figure out how to enable all people to share" in our success, he said. "Unless all of us work hard to fix public education, we will all be in trouble."

"Everybody matters and everybody counts," he said. People have to "work hard, show up, get an education," and if you're Muslim, talk about your faith in a way that improves understanding and "creates relationships."

## MLK Day events

- Bettie Mae Fikes, a professional blues and jazz singer, will discuss the civil rights movement at 6:30 p.m. today at Peace United Church of Christ, 1503 Second Ave. N.E., Rochester. Admission is free. The event is sponsored by the Diversity Council, Peace United Church of Christ, Winona State University and Anoka-Ramsey Community College.

- Poster making and youth activities begin at 10 a.m. at the city-county Government Center, 151 Fourth St. S.E. A rally at 11:45 a.m. in the city-county Government Center rotunda will be followed by a march at noon from the government center to the Marriott, 101 First Ave. S.W. for a reception and program. A birthday cake for King, hot chocolate and coffee will be served. Free. Coordinated by the Rochester branch of the NAACP.

- Gospel singer Robert Robinson was to perform a tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr. at 12:10 p.m. today, Lips Atrium, Charlton Building, Mayo Clinic. Free.



Hussein Samatar, Founder and Executive Director of the African Development Center, was the keynote speaker at the annual Martin Luther King Jr. We Have a Dream Breakfast this morning at the Rochester Event Center. Having coffee at right is Jessica Ihrke.

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A group of students from the Boys and Girls Club sang Monday morning at the Martin Luther King Jr. We Have a Dream Breakfast held at the Rochester Event Center.

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A two-time winner of Minnesota Music Award's Best Gospel Singer, Robert Robinson performed a tribute concert to Martin Luther King Jr. on Monday in the Charlton Building Lips Auditorium. The concert is part of a series of musical events sponsored by Mayo Clinic Center for Humanities in Medicine.

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Posted by **BigChip** at 5:15AM on Tuesday, 1/17/12

Well, let's just start with the more you take out of the private sector, the smaller the private sector. That's why Obama had to pass the bush tax cuts again, it wasn't time to delve wholly into socialism. Then consider taxes, everyone should pay, and if there was actually less progressive tax rates and everyone payed their share percentage wise, there could more to trickle-down hence more private sector at lower rates.

Posted by **BigChip** at 5:18AM on Tuesday, 1/17/12

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