



*Prepared by*  
The Somali Museum Staff  
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# *Mission*

The Somali Museum is the home of traditional Somali arts in Minnesota. We are a 501c3 organization displaying a collection of over 800 pieces, preserving the remainder of the collection in storage, and offering educational programs about Somali traditional culture. The Somali Museum offers an unrivaled opportunity for Minnesotans of all backgrounds to encounter and learn about Somali traditional culture.

The Somali Museum's mission is to use these artifacts as a tool for education: making it possible for young Somali-Americans who have grown up in the United States to connect with their culture, as well as Minnesotans of other ethnic heritage, to encounter Somali art and traditional culture for the first time. It's a place where Somalis born in Somalia and moved to the United States can reconnect with their culture and heritage. The Museum's programs explore the changing role of traditional arts and culture as the Somali people move across borders and time. By promoting the highest forms of Somali creativity, the Somali Museum believes that it can also help to diminish harmful prejudice and misunderstanding between the diverse communities.

Here at the Somali Museum, we see the wealth people of all ages access by discovering these artifacts, and we experience the power that grows in connecting generations together when young people ask questions about their heritage. We welcome and encourage groups from schools, religious life centers, and community organizations to schedule a special tour of the museum.



## *Programs*

The Somali Museum offers various programming as an extension to our ever-growing collection of artifacts. The most popular being the *Dance Troupe*, followed by the *Traditional Finger Weaving*, *Somali Culture 101*, *Storytelling* and last but not least, our *Traveling Exhibit*; which was our very first pilot program at the start of our journey as an institution.

If you would like to schedule or ask questions about any of our programs, please email us at [somalimuseum@gmail.com](mailto:somalimuseum@gmail.com) or call us at 1-612-234-1625.





## *Tours*

Come explore the Somali Museum of Minnesota, home to more than 800 Somali artifacts and artwork focused on the traditional nomadic lifestyle of Somalia. The founder of the Museum has been collecting items for the collection since 2009, but in 2013, we moved to our current location on Lake Street and Bloomington Avenue in Minneapolis to store, preserve and display our collection to the community.

The museum is open to the public on Tuesday and Friday from 3:00PM–7:00PM, and on Saturday and Sunday from 1:00PM–5:00PM. For only \$9–\$11, our staff will give you a personalized tour of the collection. We also give private tours outside of Open Hours to groups larger than 10 people. Group tours last between 45 minutes to an hour and a half and cost \$7–\$9 for every individual attending.



## *Dance Troupe*

The Somali Museum Dance Troupe studies and performs traditional dances from different regions across Somalia. Comprising teens and young adults from the greater Twin Cities area, the troupe has performed for countless corporate, private and public events taking place in greater Minnesota and nationwide in Tennessee, Chicago, Texas, Ohio, North Dakota, Virginia, and California.

The Dance Troupe performers work on a graduation system and are taught the art form at the young age of 15 until they're 23. Every Saturday the Dance Troupe practices for 2-3 hours with performances spread out through the week.





## *Traditional Finger Weaving*

The traditional art form of finger weaving is an age-old tradition passed down through the maternal side of the family. Using no loom or frame, Somali nomads weave mats by hand to cover their houses, to sit on, and use as bags, baskets, and buckets. Teachers Ardho Ismail, Amina Shire, Xalwo Duale and Hawa Aden teach hands-on, immersive classes for all ages; Somali and non-Somalis.



## *Traveling Exhibit*

The Somali Museum brings Somali culture to you with its Traveling Exhibit, a traveling exhibition of traditional Somali artworks. The Traveling Exhibit includes two parts:

Exhibition of 10-20 artifacts from the Somali Museum's permanent collection. The audience will be able to learn about the history, the use, and the creation of certain artifacts from the exhibition.

Question-and-answer exploration period, during which audiences can discuss and ask Somali Museum staff about individual pieces or anything pertaining to the Somali culture.





## *Somali Culture 101*

Immigrant populations in Minnesota must explore and craft the ways they will carry their culture forward as they build their community in the United States. The Somali Museum is your resource for educating yourself and training your colleagues about the rich heritage of Minnesota’s Somali community. The Somali Culture 101 Lecture can come in two different forms;

1. Somali Culture 101 taking place at the Somali Museum location: Groups will experience a guided tour of the museum, listen to a “Somali Culture 101” lecture and receive cultural training from an expert, where they can also ask questions about the Somali people and tradition.
2. Somali Culture 101 taking place at your organization: The Somali Museum will bring the collections to you accompanied by the Somali Culture 101 lecture where your professional groups and employees receive training focused on the aspects of Somali culture that influence life for Minnesotan-Somalis.



## *Storytelling*

Storytelling is an important form of expression in Somali culture and often practiced in a group setting composed of young children and elders. Somalia is traditionally an oral society, which means people relayed information through word of mouth. Storytelling and poetry was one way people entertained themselves and also a way to pass folktales and even history down from person to person and to little kids.

This past summer, we started piloting our Storytelling program with a group of kids in the Somali Museum space, followed by other storytelling programs at different locations in the Twin Cities. We believe it to be very important to pass down these traditions and practices to the youth so they can also do the same in the future.





## Somalis + Minnesota Exhibit

In 2018, we collaborated with the Minnesota Historical Society to produce the “Somalis + Minnesota” exhibit. The year-long exhibition incorporated the stories, accomplishments of local Somalis in Minneapolis and greater Minnesota, and an in-depth look into the culture and its political history. The first of its kind, the exhibit pulled in demographics from various groups and has since wrapped up in the summer of 2019. It was named one of the best exhibitions of Winter 2019 in the United States [USA Today]. Today, parts of the exhibit are on show at our Lake Street location at the Somali Museum!



# Baro Agabkaaga

/ Learn Your Artifacts

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Agabka Dhaqanka Soomaaliyeed  
/ Somali Cultural Artifacts

Goray/by  
Osman M. Ali Gurey



## *Learn Your Artifacts*

In late 2019, we were up again and working on the publishing of the Museum's first-ever book, *Baro Agabkaaga*. The book comprises a detailed description of the many artifacts we carry in our museum. In an effort to reach our academics, this book is a one for all for students learning about the culture for classes or for personal ventures. Osman Ali started on the publishing of this book 2 years prior and started with the very artifacts on display in our exhibit.





## *Community*

The Somali Museum is located in the heart of Minneapolis on one of the most diverse streets in the area. Lake Street is home to various communities and it is never a dull moment. From the May Day Parade to Open Streets, the Somali Museum always takes time to take part in events with our wonderful neighbors.



## *Our Gift Shop*

In 2018, we opened up our very own Somali Museum gift shop with the help of multiple artists, authors, and Somali fashion designers. Located on the entrance level of the Plaza Verde (right above the Museum's main entrance), we sell the Somali baati, Macawiso, shaalal, traditional hats (Koofiyado), women's traditional dress, white traditional cloth, beads, books, and more. Our goal is to have all of our visitors leave with something that reminds them of their time at the Somali Museum and of their time learning about the culture, language, and its people.





## Anniversary

Every year in October, we celebrate one of the biggest cultural celebrations in the Twin Cities. The Somali Museum Anniversary is now in its 6th year. Somali singers, actors, dancers, and esteemed community leaders all under one roof for a night of singing and fun. With a turn out of 1500-1700 audience members, we make sure to make the night packed with music that will get your heart jumping, and plays that will make sure to move you to tears of joy.

We would not be able to make the Anniversary night happen without our various sponsors and community members or volunteers. Their donations help make the dream possible every year for the past 6 years. We hope to make each year bigger and better than the last. The Anniversary is a night for people to come together and be proud about where they or their loved ones come from. A celebration of Somali language, art, music, history, and its people. We hope to keep producing the show for years to come!

# *Awards*

## *Certificate of Appreciation*

“In recognition of your valuable contribution to the Somali-American Community.”

## *Innovation Award*

“In recognition of your contributions to the Somali Community” (Somali Students Association Middle Tennessee State University, 2019).

## *Innovation Award*

(International Somali Awards, 2017).

## *Spark Award*

“With appreciation and gratitude for outstanding service to the youth and mission of Camp Fire Minnesota (Campfire Minnesota, 2017).

## *Community Impact Award*

(Lake Street Council, 2015).

## *‘Best Mini-Museum of the Twin Cities Award’*

(Minneapolis St. Paul Magazine).

## *“Somali Museum of Minnesota Day”*

Awarded by Governor Mark Dayton on October 1st, 2016.



# *Our Future*

As an institution, we have come a long way in establishing ourselves as a non-profit organization through the help of our diverse community. Donation of artifacts, money, and in general people taking an interest in learning about new cultures has taken us far. We currently have 8 dedicated staff members that work around the clock trying to keep the wheels moving on this exciting journey with the help of 20 independent contractors and 9 board of directors. That being said, we face various obstacles that bend far beyond the reach of our small group of staff. As much as we do not want to make money the solution to all problems, it is what a small museum needs to cover payment for staff, rent, productions, exhibits, and preservation of artifacts.

Our number one goal is the expansion of the building or completely moving the Somali Museum to its own building. This will take time and dedication and that is what we hope to put it in. We also need the help of donations and financial backing in order to make this a reality. Our wishes to grow our current group of staff members and have a bigger building, would allow us to grow the number of exhibitions we could produce and eventually house due to more space.

The Somali Museum has grown tremendously since its inception at the beginning of the last decade, and its growth is only going to be much greater! We will be renovating one of our rooms and offering it up as a space for rotating exhibitions. This will help generate a new number of audiences coming into the museum and help it garner new numbers. We have high hopes for the Somali Museum as an institution. It has come a long way and we hope that with the help of our supporters, we can take it to higher places.

— *The Somali Museum of Minnesota Staff*

# *Our Sponsors*

African Development Center of Minnesota  
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African Community Services  
ALH Travel Agency & Tax Return  
Ali's Catering and Food Distribution  
American Swedish Institute  
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Minnesota State Arts Board  
MN Halal  
MN Professional Health Services  
Neighborhood Development Center  
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Professional PCA Health Service  
Sanaag Coffee and Restaurant  
Silver Mountain Home Health Care  
Skyline Math and Science  
Somali American Parent Association  
Somali Senior Adult DayCare  
Taaj Services  
Twin Cities Internation Schools  
Ubah Medical Academy  
Urban Works  
US Bank  
Warsame Petroleum and Food Inc.  
Wedge Community Co-op  
Wells Fargo  
Wise Home Care

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*The*  
**SOMALI**  
**MUSEUM**  
*of MINNESOTA*