

2003 GUIDE BOOK: PEOPLE: GLOBAL INFLUENCE: International community finds a place to call home

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Body

Across metro Atlanta, even in the farthest outskirts, immigrants from around the world have established new homes and careers. Gone are the days in which they were a remarkable curiosity. Atlanta is a growing and maturing international community.

AJC

From 1990 to 2000, the 20-county metro area's foreign-born population jumped 278 percent, to 423,105, according to the Census Bureau. Some of that growth is reflected in the already established multicultural strongholds along Buford Highway, in Chamblee and Doraville. The increased presence is not limited to those areas, however. From Carroll and Douglas counties on Atlanta's west to Rockdale and Walton on the east, from Coweta on the south to Forsyth and Pickens on the north, the number of residents born in other countries has skyrocketed.

"It's no longer just the core counties that are growing," said Jeffrey Humphreys, director of economic forecasting at the University of Georgia. "Immigrants are settling in the suburban communities, not only because that is where affordable housing is, it is where the jobs are."

The suburbs also are where good schools are, said Lily Lee, who settled in Gwinnett 20 years ago, mainly because she felt the schools would provide her son with a good education. Originally from China, Lee still lives in the Peachtree Corners community she moved to in 1983.

Accompanying the growth in immigrant population has been an equally staggering growth in those communities' buying power, Humphreys said. The buying power of metro Atlanta's Hispanic population surged 711 percent between 1990 and 2002, compared with a 160 percent increase nationally. The buying power of the Asian population here jumped 358 percent, compared with 152 percent nationally, he said.

Jose Puente, president and CEO of Avenida America Inc., based in Atlanta, said growth in numbers is only part of what's happening.

"The income and types of work have changed, too," he said. "Historically, the majority of Hispanic immigrants worked in low-wage fields --- at restaurants, fast-food businesses, grocery stores, construction. During the last five years they are starting to graduate to the next level of income --- real estate, insurance, accounting, travel and other types of service-related industries."

2003 GUIDE BOOK: PEOPLE: GLOBAL INFLUENCE: International community finds a place to call home

Opportunities are a large part of what draws **people** to metro Atlanta.

"I came here for the quality of life," said Guatemala native Daniel Betancourth, who lived in New York before moving south.

"It's a nice **place** here," Lee said. "A very nice **place**."

Graphic

Photo: Daniel Betancourth, a native of Guatemala, owns Alta Vista Insurance Agency in Cumming. He says a majority of his

clients are Hispanic and some live as far away as Dahlonega./ KIMBERLY SMITH / Staff; Graphic: FOREIGN-BORN METRO RESIDENTS

Increase in foreign-born residents in metro Atlanta counties from 1990 to 2000:

County.....	Increase
Cherokee.....	488%
Clayton.....	252%
Cobb.....	295%
Coweta.....	702%
DeKalb.....	188%
Fayette.....	169%
Forsyth.....	1,144%
Fulton.....	212%
Gwinnett.....	477%
Henry.....	622%
Rockdale.....	393%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Graphic: CONSULATES & CONTACTS

Traveling overseas? Need help with visas? Want to invest overseas? Here are some of the foreign consulates or trade organizations in metro Atlanta. For more, go to www.ajc.com:

AFRICA

North African Business Council. 404-233-9808.

Liberia. Honorary consulate. 404-753-4753.

Nigeria. Consulate general. 770-394-6261.

THE AMERICAS

Canada. Consulate general, 404-532-2000.

Colombia. Consulate. 770-668-0512.

Guatemala. Honorary consulate. 404-255-7019.

Mexico. Consulate general. 404-266-2233.

Panama. Consulate. 404-522-4114.

ASIA AND PACIFIC

India. Honorary consulate. 404-898-8172.

Japan. Consulate general, 404-240-4300.

2003 GUIDE BOOK: PEOPLE: GLOBAL INFLUENCE: International community finds a place to call home

Korea. Consulate general, 404-522-1611.

Turkey. Honorary consulate. 770-913-0900.

THE CARIBBEAN

Aruba. Tourism Authority. 404-892-7822.

Bermuda. Department of Tourism. 404-524-1541.

U.S. Virgin Islands. Department of Tourism. 404-688-0906.

EUROPE

Belgium. Consulate general, 404-659-2150.

France. Consulate general, 404-495-1660.

Germany. Consulate general, 404-659-4760.

Greece. Consulate, 404-261-3391.

Iceland. Consulate general. 404-321-0777.

Italy. Honorary consulate, 404-303-0503.

The Netherlands. Consulate. 404-531-0781.

Norway. Royal consulate. 404-239-0885.

Poland. Polish-American Chamber of Commerce of the Southeast U.S. 404-724-4500.

Portugal. Portuguese-American Chamber of Commerce of the Southeast. 770-649-2576.

Romania. Romanian-American Trade Chamber and Cultural Center. 770-925-1871.

Sweden. Consulate and Swedish-American Chamber of Commerce. 678-686-1006.

Switzerland. Consulate general. 404-870-2000.

United Kingdom. British consulate general. 404-954-7700; British-American Business Group, 404-681-2224.

MIDDLE EAST

Israel. Consulate general, 404-487-6500.; Graphic: **INTERNATIONAL** ORGANIZATIONS

Metro Atlanta has many groups for immigrants and **people** with ties to foreign countries. Here are some:

Alliance Francaise d'Atlanta. 1360 Peachtree St., Suite 850, Atlanta 30309. 404-875-1211, www.afatl.com.

Asian-American Coalition. 690 Brookfield Parkway, Roswell 30075. 770-643-8945.

Atlanta-Colombian Roundtable Planning Committee. 3948 Aviation Circle, Atlanta 30336. 770-507-8667.

Atlanta Cuban Club. 5797 New Peachtree Road, Doraville 30340. 770-451-3477.

Canadian-American Society. 1188 Dorby Park Drive, Atlanta 30319. 404-261-7070.

Center for Pan-Asian **Community** Services. 3760 Park Ave., Doraville 30340. 770-936-0969.

Dominican **International** Association. P.O. Box 29906, Atlanta 30359. 404-525-7787.

Filipino-American Association of Greater Atlanta. www.atl-filam.org.

Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. 1961 N. Druid Hills Road N.E., Suite 201B, Atlanta 30329. 404-929-9998, www.ghcc.org.

Goethe Institut Atlanta. 1197 Peachtree St. N.E., Atlanta 30361. 404-892-2388.

Grupo Cultura Foundation. P.O. Box 746, Duluth 30096. 770-623-6687.

Indian-American Cultural Association. 1281 Copper Lake Road S.E., Smyrna 30082. 770-436-3719.

Japan America Society of Georgia. 233 Peachtree St., Harris Tower, Suite 2222, Atlanta 30303. 404-524-7399, www.us-japan.org/jasg.

2003 GUIDE BOOK: PEOPLE: GLOBAL INFLUENCE: International community finds a place to call home

Latin American Association. 2750 Buford Highway, Atlanta 30324. 404-638-1800, www.latinamericanassoc.org.

Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund. 41 Marietta St., Atlanta 30303. 678-559-1071, www.maldef.org/about/offices.cfm.

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Geographic: ATLANTA, GA, USA (95%); GEORGIA, USA (94%); NEW YORK, USA (79%); CHINA (79%)

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