Hello, everyone. My name is Diib Abdullahi. I am from the west side of Somalia and my family left Somalia in 1991 when the civil war started. We lived in a refugee camp in Kenya for many years. My older brother sponsored us and we moved to Minnesota to join him. We arrived in St. Paul in February 2006. Today I want to tell you about my mother’s xeedho that she brought with us. The xeedho is a Somali traditional wedding gift. It’s very, very important to me and my family because this object was with my family for a long time, for more than eight generations. It started way back when it belonged to my great-grandma. She gave it to her daughter, and her daughter gave it to her daughter, and her daughter gave it to her daughter, and so on, until it reached my mother. And my mother will give it to us, me and my sister.

The xeedho is a part of Somali wedding tradition. When a daughter gets married, her mother and aunts give her a xeedho that is filled with gifts for the new couple. Every Somali woman has a xeedho. My sister got married in March 2009. My mother was glad that she had a xeedho to give to her. My mom put gold jewelry and clothes and perfumes in the xeedho. She gave it to my sister. My aunt put dates with meat and butter in a xeedho. My other aunt put her dried fruits in the xeedho. My other aunt put money in a xeedho. My sister received eight xeedhos for her wedding. My mom’s xeedho was the most important. Not only did it contain sweet gifts but it has been part of my family for a long time. And so it means a lot.

This xeedho has traveled from Somalia to Kenya to Minnesota. When we left Kenya we had to bring it on the plane with us. The xeedho is not a small object, so it gave us a lot of trouble to carry it on the plane. But my mother said, this is the only thing that I have of all of my country, of all of my memories. I am not leaving this in Kenya. I am going to bring this with me. I have held onto this for a long time, so I give it to my daughters on their wedding day. You guys are going to help me take this. The xeedho is three pieces, and so we each put a piece in our luggage. We all carried it with us to America. When we arrived, we put it back together and put it in a very safe place. Our xeedho has traveled thousands of miles. Now I realize how important this object is, not only to my mother, but to my sister and me. I realize how important it is to my family and even my future family. I plan to take care of it and pass it to my future daughters.