



Beacon Hill Funk Fest Contribution Request

About The Event:

The History of the Beacon Hill Concert Series

I am seeking your contribution to help fund an important part of the educational programming for Decatur's Bicentennial, the Beacon Hill Funk Fest. The Beacon Hill Funk Fest is the only Decatur Bicentennial event that focuses on the Beacon Hill community, the thriving Black community of homes, businesses and churches within Decatur that was assumed and destroyed using ordinance changes and discriminatory practices, under the guise of urban renewal in the 1950s and 60s. In what used to be Beacon Hill now sits the largest concentration of Decatur Housing Authority properties, Decatur High School, the DeKalb County Courthouse, the Maloof Building and even the Decatur Bandstand. Beacon Hill extended from where Thinking Man Tavern is now located to the Bandstand on the square.

Last year, The Beacon Hill Concert Series was created, after a suggestion from Decatur Mayor Emeritus Elizabeth Wilson- Decatur's only Black Mayor in its 200 year history- that I host a concert in the green space that sits at the site of the historic Beacon School/Trinity High School. This site is specifically important, as Beacon/Trinity- and Herring Street School before it- were the Black schools in Decatur during segregation and it is also the site of the first Art for the People installment, "What Sonia Says." The purpose of this concert series since its inception has been to educate attendees on the history of Beacon Hill- both of its existence and of the unjust policies and actions by the City of Decatur that led to its destruction. Each concert featured a brief talk from one of the former residents and allowed us an opportunity for our community to welcome home the former Beacon Hill residents who were in attendance. The Beacon Elders, as they are affectionately known, were invited to each show via a handwritten letter from me and sat in a place of prominence at each performance.

Last year, we hosted John Boy and Surround Sound, Grammy Award nominated singer/songwriter Anthony David, and acclaimed cellist, composer and social justice educator, OkCello. All shows were free and open to the public.

The Beacon Hill Funk Fest

This year is Decatur's Bicentennial and rather than host three or four small concerts, we are hosting one large concert, featuring **legendary funk bands, Brick and Lakeside** and popular local band, John Boy and Surround Sound. DJ Quasi Mandisco will be spinning sets between each artist. Residents of Beacon Hill will be providing educational talks between each band's performance, sharing the stories of the business owners, residents, community organizers and change makers who fought against racism, segregation and inequity to help make Decatur that city that it is today. Many more will be in attendance to be recognized, honored and celebrated for their contributions to our community. The size of the event will allow us to share this important aspect of Decatur's history more widely than ever before.

The Beacon Hill Funk Fest is not just an concert. It is a step toward restorative justice and equity, starting with acknowledgment and education. This effort aligns with the Equity & Racial Justice priority within the Decatur 2030 Strategic Plan.

It wouldn't be a Beacon Hill concert without it being held in Beacon Hill, so the stage will be strategically placed near the bandstand and Beacon Elders will be sharing their history throughout the show. **This show open to the public and will be free to attend.**

The Beacon Hill Funk Fest will be co-hosted by Beacon Hill Black Alliance for Human Rights and is currently being sponsored by Decatur Tourism Bureau and the Decatur Downtown Development Authority.

I am hoping that the purpose of this show and the opportunity to commemorate this important part of Decatur's history amongst a wide audience is something that you will support with a contribution to help fund this programming.

-Commissioner Lesa Mayer, City of Decatur



Contribution:

Remaining Funding Goal- \$25,000

Legacy Decatur:

Legacy Decatur is a 501(c)(3) established in Decatur in 2015 that is partnering with the City of Decatur and other organizations to create meaningful programs honor our community's values for future generations. The Beacon Hill Funk Fest is one of many events and activities celebrating and commemorating Decatur's Bicentennial. Contributions for this programming should be made to Legacy Decatur.