

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Unity Fest 2023

A Free Family Festival

- **What:** Diverse Performers, Inspiring Speakers, Free Food & Activities
- **When:** Saturday, September 30th, 2023 from 11:00 AM until 4:00 PM
- **Where:** LeClaire Park, Edwardsville, IL 62025
- **Cost:** FREE including all food, entertainment and activities
- **More Info:** EdwardsvilleUnity.com



Unity Fest 2023 will be held 11-4 PM on September 30th of 2023 at LeClaire Park, Edwardsville. We are inviting fellow well-wishers of humanity to attend this free festival, showcasing inspiring speakers and culturally diverse performers with this year's theme, "Unity Begins With U." The event will also include family-friendly activities, art projects and age-appropriate lessons on diversity and unity. Interfaith prayers will be shared from a variety of denominations and religions. Additionally, booths throughout the park will feature like-minded organizations sharing information and activities. Free food will be provided from local and minority owned businesses.

“I am super excited to bring back Unity Fest for a second time. We’re going to bring as many different voices and faces into one place as possible in an effort to change the national narrative that we can’t all get along. In order for us to achieve our goal, we need you, your family and friends, to join us for a wonderful day of free food, education and entertainment.”

- Jesse Allen, Edwardsville Unity Chair

About the music

Unity Fest boasts an all-new lineup of performers this year representing the diversity of talent in the Greater St. Louis area. The Gateway Men’s Chorus are the longest tenured LGBTQIA+ arts organization, sharing a wide range of acapella vocal performances to entertain and warm the hearts of the audience. Samantha Clemons is a soul-folk artist, backed by a full band, who brings her passion to the stage as she sings of personal and universal hardships and experience.

Alma De Mexico is a dance group that puts the soul of the Mexican tradition on full display through movement, music and costumes.

As the name implies, the St. Louis Traditional Chinese Music Ensemble performs a variety of traditional Chinese instruments and songs fostering Chinese culture and heritage through a program that is the pride of our community.

About the speakers

The festival will open with remarks from Edwardsville Mayor, Art Risavy. Followed by LaShawnda Williams, a local poet and a voice of hope and change. Riz Kahn is an Indian-American businessman, public speaker and president of the Little Angels Foundation which provides free food and support to homeless immigrant families in the St. Louis Metro Area. Ben Greene brings his experience as a transgender man into education related to gender and sexuality with knowledge and humor.

Antonio Maldonado, the chairman of the board for the Hispanic Leaders Group of Greater St Louis, has been a strong advocate for the Hispanic community. His brilliant career has helped lead the way for the Hispanic community in and around the St. Louis Metro area.

About the food

Edwardsville Unity will provide free food from 3 of the metro area's finest food trucks: Gulf Shores, Cedar Mediterranean and Ray’s Soul Touching Tacos. Additionally, there will be fruit and a variety of culturally diverse snacks and goodies: Kazoo Coffee will provide free

caffeinated drinks, Green Earth will share vegetarian and vegan options, Mac's Family Fun Time will share popcorn and frozen custard.

About the booths

There will be dozens of community booths from various local organizations, all with information and free activities. Groups you've heard of, such as the NAACP, Edwardsville Public Library and the YMCA/YWCA. And groups you might not have heard of, such as the MetroEast Interfaith Partnership and the National Museum of African Americans on Stamps. Giving the community an opportunity to connect with these groups facilitates their work as we build a better world together.

About Edwardsville Unity

Edwardsville Unity is a group of individuals and organizations working towards increased unity in our town and beyond. Since 2017, the mission of Edwardsville Unity has been to encourage togetherness and solidarity through education, collaboration and community building activities. For more information, please feel free to contact us at your convenience or learn more at www.EdwardsvilleUnity.com.

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