

Annual Report

10th Annual Springfield Jazz & Roots Festival

Check out all you helped us accomplish by using music of the African diaspora to create social change throughout 2023!

About 6,850 people flocked to the festival, including about 350 at pre-festival events on July 20 and 6,500 at the main event in downtown Springfield on July 21-22, spread across Stearns Square, Tower Square Park, and Worthington and Bridge Streets, which were shut down and lined with food and craft vendors booths.

A diverse audience enjoyed 20 musical performances on two stages playing: jazz, soul, blues, funk, hip-hop, rock, Afro-Caribbean, afrobeat, Latin, Garifuna, fusion, etc.

The 208 musicians included:

79 nationally and internationally acclaimed artists who drew audiences from near and far.

84 local artists who got paid to perform for thousands and expand their following.

45 local youth musicians.



Please think of us in your year-end giving.
Go to BluesToGreen.org to Donate



“Festive, colorful, energetic, happy.”

“True multi-cultural positive vibe.”



“Amazing international lineup, great food vendors and crafts, and always meet other music fans.”



“Vibrant, happy, and sense of unity and camaraderie.”

*“Mixed community together
All ages, all races. Love it.”*

“This is the highlight of the year for us.”

- Attendees

Family Activities

- A participatory parade with about 125 people of all ages dancing down the street.
- An art tent where about 900 adults and children made eco-friendly maracas, decorated their own piece of a wooden community puzzle, had their faces painted, and more.



Supporting Local Nonprofits & Businesses

The **Springfield Jazz Fest** was a platform for **18 local nonprofits** to reach thousands by leading arts activities, performing, and educating attendees.

It brought economic stimulus, as thousands of attendees patronized the **17** local artisans and **8** local food/drink vendors onsite and the **8** restaurants nearby.

Jazz & Justice Series

- The day before the festival, the Garifuna Collective taught 90+ BIPOC children about music and culture of the Garifuna, descendants of West African slaves and the Indigenous Arawak and Carib, then gave a concert for 250 diverse people
- Event-day screenings of *The City of a Million Dreams*, about the New Orleans jazz funeral parade tradition, with 65 attendees and Q&A with the filmmaker
- A pop-up exhibit from nonprofit Departamento de la Comida in a shipping container, where about 700 visitors learned about traditional Puerto Rican agriculture and the connections between food, culture, and sustainability.

It reminded me of how music can impact the world. - Student



2nd Annual Legacy Education Project

6 acclaimed Black and Afro-Caribbean festival musicians gave one 6-hour and five 9-hour residencies, each over 2-3 days, to **420+ 6-11th graders** in Springfield and Holyoke public schools.

Since the pilot, we grew from **3** to **6** residences and from **27** to **51** residency hours.

Residencies were at three public schools:

Duggan Academy in Springfield:

84% Black and Latinx

JFK Middle School in Springfield:

88% Black and Latinx

Holyoke High School:

85% Black and Latinx

Musicians used historic Black and Afro-Caribbean music to teach history and music from Black and Afro-Caribbean perspectives:

- The Great Migration and Harlem Renaissance
- African and Taino roots of Puerto Rican music
- Cuban music and history
- African culture through music
- African-American and Native American music and history

This helped correct white-centric education and make school more enjoyable. We filmed sessions to make an online version of the program.

In evaluations, students affirmed deepened understanding of:

- Black music, culture, and history
- How the history of movements against oppression can strengthen those movements today.
- Music and other arts as tools for healing, resilience, and social change.

