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A2SF SEEKS PARTICIPANTS FOR BLACK COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION

ANN ARBOR, MI (September 24, 2020) – A2SF (Ann Arbor Summer Festival) seeks participants for its second Community Listening Session. The October session focuses on Black residents in Washtenaw County and helps A2SF learn how to better serve and represent residents in its programming and leadership.

The A2SF Listening Sessions began in February, focused on the South Asian community, and yielded several virtual offerings in the pandemic-adapted Summer Festival. [MELA Arts Connect](#) Founder and CEO Heena Patel led both the Listening Session and a virtual [Garba 360](#) event.

“The work we began earlier this year with the South Asian Listening Session with support from the National Endowment for the Arts energized our organization,” said Executive Director Mike Michelon. “It sparked a series of sessions and expanded to the Black community. Ultimately, we desire deeper relationships with all residents throughout the county.”

To conclude its 2020 Festival, A2SF held a public virtual panel discussion with Black arts and non-profit leaders [The Future of the Arts Must Be Antiracist](#). Yodit Mesfin Johnson, the President & CEO of Nonprofit Enterprise at Work (NEW), facilitated the conversation with Omari Rush, CultureSource Executive Director, Jenny Jones, Development and Administrative Director for Title Track, and Jamall Bufford, Project Specialist coordinating Washtenaw My Brother’s Keeper (WMBK).

Recently, A2SF Programming & Operations Manager James Carter was accepted into the [Champions for Change](#) program at NEW. According to NEW’s website, “Champions for Change is a community of practice working towards an anti-racist, co-liberated future. Here, you can learn new ways to disrupt institutional, interpersonal, individual, and internalized racism. Here,



you have space for radical imagination, experimentation, and transformative work. Here, the diverse ideas, experiences, and identities of our community will inspire and guide you.”

To participate in the Black community Listening Session in October, email A2SF Marketing and Communications Manager Natalie Robbins at info@a2sf.org. A2SF will offer resources to support participants in the session.

A2SF is an exhilarating celebration of performing arts, outdoor entertainment, and community spirit. An annual international arts gathering in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the three-week festival offers two parallel programs—one indoor and one outdoor—at various venues and spaces across the University of Michigan campus and in downtown Ann Arbor. Each season features a progressive mix of over 200 events showcasing local, national, and international artists and a diverse audience of more than 80,000 people.

The indoor ticketed series includes performances of world-class music, contemporary circus, dance, family entertainment, public radio shows, and comedy. The outdoor program, *Top of the Park*, is held along a beautiful campus green and offers admission-free concerts, *Movies by Moonlight*, open-air street spectacle, culinary treats, and unique family attractions.

A2SF’s admission free series located at *Top of the Park* was originally scheduled to run nightly from June 12-July 5, 2020 (dark on Mondays).

A2SF, which was originally formed as a partnership between the University of Michigan and City of Ann Arbor, produced its first, full season in 1984. 2020 marks the first cancelation of *Top of the Park*. *Top of the Park* takes place on Ingalls Mall and Washington Street in downtown Ann Arbor. It has been relocated twice in its history due to construction (2006 it moved from the Fletcher Street Parking Deck to Ingalls Mall, and in 2015 it temporarily relocated to North University Avenue for one-year).

For more information on all festival events, please visit the festival website: a2sf.org

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