

**GHANA NATIONAL COUNCIL
OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO
PRESS RELEASE**

Ghanafest 2009 is this Saturday, July 25th, 2009 at Chicago's Washington Park at 5600 South Russell Avenue, the Street east of Martin Luther King Drive and 55th street (aka Garfield Blouvard). West of Du Sable Museum and near the swimming pool. It is the same location as last year's. For those who would need further directions, call 773-636-7013, 773-558-9227 or 773-960-5416.

This year's is historic one. This is the very first festival the Council did not receive any grant from the City of Chicago. For clarification of record, that for 2007 grant was \$1,250.00. 2008 was \$850.00. These aside, for some years of Ghanafest, the Chicago Park District batters a \$1,000.00 sponsorship of "Movie on the Park" for a 50% reduction of Park Usage Fee. This year, we were denied and have to pay fully for the park usage fee to the tune of \$5,425.00. Additionally, we have to pay a deposit of \$5,000.00(this is refundable though on condition the park was cleaned good after the festival).

All Vendors for equipment (i.e.; tents, chairs, tables, electricity, fencing, toilets etc) to be used have to be paid in full before the festival takes off. These totaled \$26,000.00. All the many hours put into organizing this are voluntary by the Executives of the Ghana National Council. The many trips to City Hall, Park District, and Vendors (many are out of City limits) the gas, parking fees, tolls etc. phone bills on the Executives cell phones, many hours on the internet back and forth soliciting for sponsorship and negotiations are all pro-bono for the interest of community. To sum up, this year's Ghanafest will cost \$36,000.00 to fund from private sources. All the 11 Associations will donate \$5,500.00 by way of selling raffle tickets (even at rebate). They sell \$1,000.00, keep \$500.00 and give \$500.00 to the Council?

By all these prevailing, we had no choice but ask the community for patronage of a token of \$5.00 to sustain and preserve the festival for our children's children. Besides, it has been a Ghanaian identity well recognized by the City of Chicago and all Ghanaians in the Diasporas and our African American cousins as well as the institutions of State of Illinois. It is equally popular with our European friends as well as our homeland, Ghana.

I therefore plead with our attendees to comport themselves at the gates for the smooth transition of a free entry into a paid one. We have tried to bring in a live band featuring all the Ghanaian musicians in Chicago plus our best DJ Boogie in town. This year's cultural display will be unparallel and full of fun. The chiefs are going to be at their very best. Let all who would attend this year's festival braze for a wonderful festival experience. The gates will open at 11.00 prompt and end at 10.00pm. If you want African arts and craft, it will be there cheaply to buy plus a good taste of Ghanaian cuisine. Hope to see you there.

I thank you dearly.

JOHN HENRY ASSABILL,PRESIDENT (GNC)