



**26th Annual  
Down Home  
Family Reunion**

*A Celebration of African American Folklife*

**August 20, 2016  
Richmond, Virginia**

**Elegba Folklore Society, Inc.**

**Richmond's Cultural Ambassador**

*101 E. Broad St, Richmond, Virginia 23219*

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**OFFICIAL PRESS KIT**

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## Fact Sheet

- WHEN**            **Saturday, August 20 • 4 - 11 pm, Free.**
- WHERE**           **Abner Clay Park**, Belvidere & West Leigh Streets (at I-95 & Exit 76B Interchange) in Historic Jackson Ward, Richmond, Virginia.
- WHO**              A Family Festival Open to the Public.
- Presented by Elegba Folklore Society, Inc.**  
**Richmond's Cultural Ambassador**  
Sponsored by: City of Richmond, Dominion, Wells Fargo, UPS, Upscale Magazine, Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities, WRIR 97.3FM, Richmond Independent Radio  
Additional Support: CultureWorks' Arts & Cultural Funding Consortium - Richmond, Henrico, Hanover
- WHAT**            A Celebration of African American Folklife. **Returning for its Twenty-Sixth Year**, this Weekend Event **shares global African cultural influences** with An All-Star Line-Up of World Music and Dance, Entertainment and Material Culture Traditions.
- FEATURES**      **Onstage:** R&B Hit makers, **The Intruders**, Puerto Rico's **Luis y Su Revolu**, Reggae Band, **Adwela and the Uprising**, African Dance, Music & the Oral Tradition with **Elegba Folklore Society** and more.
- Emceed by J. Ron Fleming**, A Master of the Spoken Word.  
**In the Park:** Interactive Folkloric Demonstrations, The Juanita Ragland Heritage Market, Delicious Down Home Food, Annie Tyler New School Pavilion featuring youthful performers and cultural engagement plus the Waverly Crawley Community Row.

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ELEGBA FOLKLORE SOCIETY PRESENTS  
**26th ANNUAL DOWN HOME FAMILY REUNION,  
A CELEBRATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FOLK LIFE****

**RICHMOND, VA** • The *26th Annual Down Home Family Reunion* explores a full spectrum of music, dance, stories, food, shopping and enrichment in this weekend **Celebration of African American Folklife**. Elegba Folklore Society, Richmond's Cultural Ambassador, presents this cultural arts festival that takes attendees on a journey of heritage and folklore from West Africa into the Americas.

On **Saturday, August 20**, the *26th Annual Down Home Family Reunion's Family Festival* will happen, **4:00 - 11:00 p.m.**, at **Abner Clay Park, Belvidere and West Leigh Streets**, downtown in Historic Jackson Ward. Elegba Folklore Society invites Virginians and visitors to this event designed to link West African and African American cultural traditions and to demonstrate ways these practices have influenced the American South.

The *26th Annual Down Home Family Reunion* is presented by the Elegba Folklore Society, Inc., Richmond's Cultural Ambassador and sponsored by the City of Richmond, Dominion, Wells Fargo, UPS, Upscale Magazine, Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities and WRIR 97.3FM, Richmond Independent

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## 26th Annual Down Home Family Reunion/444

Radio and partial support from CultureWorks' Arts & Cultural Funding Consortium – Richmond, Henrico, Hanover and Radio Communications of Virginia.

The **VIP Gold Circle** returns this year. Festival attendees may obtain special seating at the stage throughout the day, complimentary food and beverages and a private meet and greet with the **26th Annual Down Home Family Reunion's** headliner, **The Intruders**. Tickets are \$30.00 and available at <http://efsinc.org> or by calling or visiting Elegba Folklore Society's Cultural Center, 101 E. Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia, 804.644.3900.

It was 1965, and the legendary songwriters and producers Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff first contemplated launching their own recording label. The vocalists on whom they pinned all their hopes and venture capital were **The Intruders**. Gamble and Huff acknowledged that their work with **The Intruders** was the very foundation of what they called "The Sound Of Philadelphia". Attendees will hear **The Intruders** greatest hits, including *I'll Always Love My Mama*, *Together* and, of course, *Cowboys to Girls*. Rhythm and Blues as both a musical style and social expression has become central to the African American evolutionary experience. A blend of blues and gospel music traditions, the first is filled with the laments of hard times and survival; the second, faith, joy and hope.

Musical evolution is synonymous with evolving cultural expression throughout the African Diaspora. The **26th Annual Down Home Family Reunion** welcomes the Afro-Puerto Rican ensemble, **Luis y Su Revolu** to share the African rooted, musical derivatives salsa, bomba and plena. Like the African American Rhythm and Blues, these blends demonstrate the connections between people and experience.

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## **26th Annual Down Home Family Reunion/555**

**Adwela and the Uprising** invite attendees to remain in the Caribbean for some roots reggae sounds. After winning Best New Artist of 2015 at the Virginia Reggae Awards, the band's leader, Adwela Dawes said, "It's music for the people, the voice of the ghetto and all the suffering in the world," he said. "It brings a message of positivity and hope while also attacking social and political issues that need to be addressed."

**Elegba Folklore Society's exciting and culturally enriching performance company** will appear with a colorful and interactive program of African dance, music and the oral tradition that celebrates the oneness of the African Diaspora. The company has performed domestically and internationally. They will engage the festival's audience with relatable stories and traditions no matter their age or background. "In a way that perhaps you will expect or in a way that is totally spontaneous, your energy will blend beautifully with ours, closing the gap between performer and audience. Participants find themselves swept up in the oneness of movement and rhythm that links them with the global significance of this timeless art form," says the group's artistic director, Janine Yvette Bell. The Chakaba masquerade (stilt walker) is featured. **Elegba Folklore Society's performance company** is an annual festival favorite.

**J. Ron Fleming**, Richmond's own noted storyteller and actor, emcees.

People **in the park** will revisit and participate in a variety of cultural traditions. As a highlight of the **26th Annual Down Home Family Reunion** attendees will have the chance to participate in three **Interactive Folkloric Demonstrations**. Attendees will learn about Black cowboys in history and in today's rodeo via participants in the **Bill Pickett Rodeo**. They will have the opportunity to understand more about **Urban Gardening** and how to get started, and, also, they can vicariously leave the United States in a special area called Visit Sudan.

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## 26th Annual Down Home Family Reunion/6

**Events for children and teens** are focused in the **Annie Tyler New School Pavilion** and include a showcase of youthful performers, take-home craft making where youth can create symbols to grow by, African inspired face painting, the moon bounce and more.

A captivating **Juanita Ragland Heritage Market** will offer an assortment of art, hand-mades and imports for browsing and purchase. Community service providers will inform from the **Waverly Crawley Community Row**.

**Food** is a familiar way to continue the celebration of shared traditions, and it continues to be a centerpiece for the **Down Home Family Reunion**. This year's selections will include Southern style chicken, corn-fried fish, an assortment of down home vegetables, frozen fruits and mouth-watering desserts that are African-inspired and Southern favorites.

**Down Home Family Reunion** is grateful to offer **parking** for the festival in the lots at Belvidere and Leigh Streets, Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church and the lots across from the church. Signage will help direct patrons to these locations.

## 25th Annual Down Home Family Reunion/777

### 25TH ANNUAL DOWN HOME FAMILY REUNION EVENT SCHEDULE

#### **Saturday, August 20 • 4:00 - 11:00p.m.**

- 4:00 Luis y Su Revolu**  
Afro-Puerto Rican Salsa, Bomba & Plena
- 5:15 Adwela and the Uprising**  
Reggae
- 6:45 R&B Dance Music**  
R&B Dance Music
- 8:00 African Dance & Music with Elegba Folklore Society**  
Come into the Village!
- 9:30 The Intruders**  
The Legacy of Big Sonny and Bird as produced by Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff creators of the Philadelphia Sound.
- 11:00 Event Closes**

**J. Ron Fleming emcees throughout the day. The Juanita Ragland Heritage Market, Annie Tyler Memorial New School Pavilion, Waverly Crawley Memorial Community Row and interactive activities in the park are ongoing from 4:00 - 11:00 p.m.**

## **Directions to Abner Clay Park West Leigh Street @ Belvidere Street 23220**

From I-95 South & I-64 East: I-64 merges with I-95. Take Belvidere Street, Exit 76B. Follow ramp to Leigh Street, turn left. Cross Belvidere at light. See Belvidere Medical Center on right, fire station and Ebenezer Church on left. Clay Park on right.

From I-95 North: Take Exit 76A, Chamberlayne Avenue. Turn left at light onto Chamberlayne Parkway. Proceed to next light at Bill "Bojangles" Robinson statue (Adams Street) and Leigh Street. Turn right. After about 1/2 block you will see Clay Park on left.

From I-64 West: Take 5th Street exit. Follow 5th Street to Leigh Street. Turn right. Follow Leigh Street several blocks. Watch for Bill Robinson statue on right at Adams Street. After passing the statue, in about 1/2 block you will see Clay Park on left.

### **Parking**

Complimentary parking is available on the streets surrounding the park. Signage will direct attendees to lots at Belvidere and West Leigh Streets, Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church and the lots across the street from SMZ.

### **Accommodations**

The festival's host hotel is the Clarion Hotel, 3207 N. Boulevard 23230. Overnight guests can contact Elegba Folklore Society for details or the hotel at 804.359.9441.

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The Elegba Folklore Society is a widely recognized, not-for-profit organization that offers services in cultural arts programming and education. In addition to planning special events, services include organizing exhibitions of art and artifacts, presenting performance and teaching programs in dance theatre and music, and guiding cultural history tours. This group created the **Down Home Family Reunion** and has produced it annually since its inception.

*In its twenty-sixth consecutive year, the **Elegba Folklore Society** is partnering with several companies and cultural institutions to present the **Down Home Family Reunion**, a celebration of African American folklife. The **Down Home Family Reunion** interactively explores the folkloric connections between West Africa and the United States -- the cultural influences that are naturally a part of African American traditions and those that have become a part of Southern life.*

*Elegba -- eh LEHG bah -- is the name given to the Orisa --ohr• REE• shah-- (an intercessor or aspect of nature) who, in the Yoruba --YOUR• ruh• bah tradition of West Africa, is the gatekeeper. He opens the roads to bring clarity out of confusion. Through its various services, the Elegba Folklore Society hopes to provide road-opening experiences for its audiences. Janine Yvette Bell is the society's founder and artistic director.*

***The Elegba Folklore Society is Richmond's Cultural Ambassador.***

***Embrace the spirit!***

For more information, call the Elegba Folklore Society at 804/644-3900, email [story1@efsinc.org](mailto:story1@efsinc.org) or log on to [www.efsinc.org](http://www.efsinc.org). Find us on Facebook or Twitter.

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