

JOIN ELEGBA FOLKLORE SOCIETY

It's The 34th

**DOWN HOME
FAMILY REUNION**

A Celebration of African American Folklife

**A u g u s t 1 6 , 2 0 2 5
R i c h m o n d , V i r g i n i a**

Elegba Folklore Society, Inc.

Richmond's Cultural Ambassador

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Official Press Kit

Details: Janine Bell
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Fact Sheet

WHEN Saturday, August 16 • 4p - 11p, Free.

WHERE Abner Clay Park, 200 E Clay St, Richmond, Virginia.

WHO A Family Festival Open to the Public.

Presented by Elegba Folklore Society, Inc.

Richmond's Cultural Ambassador

In Partnership With: City of Richmond, Dominion Energy, Commonwealth of Virginia, BLK RVA, Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities, 12 About Town, The CW Richmond, Gray and United Nations' 2015 – 2024 International Decade for People of African Descent and State of the African Diaspora.

Additional Support: CultureWorks' Arts & Cultural Funding Consortium - Richmond, Henrico, Hanover

WHAT A Celebration of African American Folklife. **Returning for its Thirty-Fourth Year**, this Weekend Event shares global African cultural influences with An All-Star Line-Up of World Music, Entertainment and Material Culture Traditions.

FEATURES **On the Zeke Allison Main Stage:** The Legendary **Blue Magic**, Nigeria's **Toby Foyeh**, **Proverbs Reggae Band**, **Corey Harris** plays the blues, **Elegba Folklore Society's** African dancers and drummers, and soul singer, **Rodney Stith**.

In the Park: Interactive Folkloric Demonstrations, The Juanita Ragland Heritage Market, Delicious Down Home Food, Annie Tyler Children's Place and the Waverly Crawley Community Row.

ALERTS Please scroll to page 6 for details about do's and don'ts, parking, shuttles, drop off and pick up locations.

IMAGES <https://app.box.com/s/devsqohy1y1fwwftewx20hazrfiyg4q3>

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34th Down Home Family Reunion/333

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ELEGBA FOLKLORE SOCIETY PRESENTS 34th DOWN HOME FAMILY REUNION, A CELEBRATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FOLK LIFE

RICHMOND, VA • The *34th 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 16**, the *34th Down Home Family Reunion* will happen, **4:00 - 11:00 p.m.**, downtown in **Historic Jackson Ward's Abner Clay Park, 200 W Clay Street**. Elegba Folklore Society invites Virginians and visitors back 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 *34th Down Home Family Reunion, A Celebration of African American Folklife* is presented by the Elegba Folklore Society, Inc., Richmond's Cultural Ambassador, in partnership with the City of Richmond, Dominion Energy, Commonwealth of Virginia, Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities, 12 About Town, The CW Richmond, Gray, BLK RVA and internationally, United Nations' 2015 – 2024 International Decade for People of African Descent. Additional support is provided through the CultureWorks' Arts & Cultural Funding Consortium - Richmond, Henrico, Hanover.

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34th Down Home Family Reunion/444

Attendees can be a part of **Bringing the World Home** in this Celebration of African American Folklife — a celebration of culture, a celebration of heritage, a celebration of the soul. The influences of Africans and African Americans on the fabric of America interweaves endless impact that has shaped our world in the sciences, in design, in mathematics, in literature and all forms of the arts, in athletics, in foodways traditions, politics, social change, education and more. America would not recognize itself otherwise. In **Bringing the World Home** we see ourselves more clearly here and in a global community.

Blue Magic headlines the *34th Down Home Family Reunion*. From the solid gold vault of the 1970s, **Blue Magic** is an iconic R&B group with a hit list of top 10 love songs and ballads. The group's arrangements interweave the Philadelphia sound of its hometown in hits such as *Sideshow*, *Just Don't Want to be Lonely* and *What's Come Over Me*. Entertaining for decades and gaining fans across generations, **Blue Magic** has something in its expansive catalogue for everyone.

Elegba Folklore Society welcomes **Toby Foyeh and Orchestra Africa** to the Zeke Allison Main Stage. A prolific Nigerian musician, he along with his band, are internationally known for their unique sound, dubbed *AfriJam*, which blends Nigeria's traditional music — Highlife, Afrobeat and traditional Yoruba music — with rock, pop and jazz.

Elegba Folklore Society's exciting and culturally enriching performing 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 performs 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 away 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. This year the djembe orchestra expands to include strings. **Elegba Folklore Society's performance company** is an annual festival favorite.

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34th Down Home Family Reunion/555

Corey Harris is a world renowned guitarist, vocalist, songwriter and band leader who has carved out his own niche in blues. He is a powerful singer and accomplished guitarist who not only makes waves in the blues world, but bends genres to show Africa's origin in one of America's oldest styles of popular music. Corey Harris performs throughout North America and also in Europe, Brazil, the Caribbean, West Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

Proverbs Reggae Band utilizes strong lyrical content and musical expressions to maintain the authentic sound of roots music. Specializing in social consciousness, the band endeavors to promote ancient wisdom through the art of music, thereby spreading the message of Rastarian spirit and culture through word, power and sound.

The **Zeke Allison Main Stage** opens up with soul singer **Rodney Stith**. His powerful urban retro soul reflects the sound of classic R&B's mellow emotion. A musical bridge between timeless R&B and a new generation, each performance blends the foundations of his gospel beginnings with family with contemporary soul music.

People **in the park** will revisit and participate in a variety of cultural traditions. As a highlight of the **34th Down Home Family Reunion**, attendees will have the chance to participate in three **Interactive Folkloric Demonstrations** that are sessions for cultural education. Attendees can visit **Roots of Excellence Montessori School** and Roots of Excellence Community Montessori learn about authentic Montessori education rooted in Pan-African principles, they can visit **The Harbor School**, or they can also explore revolutionary urban gardening with **Happily Natural Day**.

Events for children and teens are focused in the **Annie Tyler Children's Place**, where participants can showcase their performing talents and create a craft in recognition of the **34th Down Home Family Reunion's** theme, **Bringing the World Home**. Plus, there will be games, contests 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**.

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Food is a familiar way to continue the celebration of shared traditions, and it continues to be a centerpiece for the *334th Down Home Family Reunion, A Celebration of African American Folklife*. Visit the [Juanita Ragland Heritage Market](#) to sample entrées and mouth-watering desserts that are African-inspired and Southern favorites.

ATTENTION

34th Down Home Family Reunion will place signage to lead attendees to convenient parking and satellite parking. Attendees should not park on residential streets where time-based ticketing and towing is enforced. Attendees are encouraged to visit www.efsinc.org for parking updates and shuttle schedules. While the festival disallows attendees to bring coolers or animals, there will be two tent villages for personal pop-ups and a drop off and pick up point in front of the park at 200 W Clay St, W Clay and Brook Road, for those who need it.

34th Down Home Family Reunion/777

34TH DOWN HOME FAMILY REUNION EVENT SCHEDULE

Zeke Allison Main Stage

- 4:15 Rodney Stith**
Soul and R&B
- 5:15 Proverbs Reggae Band**
Roots Reggae
- 6:30 Corey Harris**
Blues
- 7:30 Elegba Folklore Society**
The Dance & Music of the Manding of West Africa
- 8:30 Toby Foyeh & Orchestra Africa**
West African AfriJam
- 9:45 Blue Magic**
Solid Gold R&B
- 11:00 Event Closes**

Annie Tyler Children's Place • Open from 4:00p - 8:00p

Juanita Ragland Heritage Market • Ongoing from 4:00p - 11:00p

Waverly Crawley Community Row • Ongoing from 4:00p - 11:00p

Interactive Folkloric Demonstrations • Ongoing from 4:00p - 11:00p

Festival presenter, **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 visual art and material culture, presenting performance and teaching programs in dance theatre and music and guiding cultural history tours. This group created the ***Down Home Family Reunion, A Celebration of African American Folklife*** and has produced it annually (minus Covid 2020) since its inception.

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34th Down Home Family Reunion/888

Elegba -- eh LEHG bah -- is the name given to the Oriṣa --ohr• REE• shah-- (an intercessor or aspect of nature) who, in the Yoruba --YOUR• ruh• bah tradition of West Africa, is a 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.

Elegba Folklore Society is Richmond's Cultural Ambassador
Embrace the spirit!

For more information, the public can call the Elegba Folklore Society at 804/644-3900, email story1@efsinc.org, log on to www.efsinc.org and find Elegba Folklore Society on Facebook or Instagram (@efsinc).

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