



LEVITT NETWORK PANEL

**STRATEGIC COLLABORATION:
HOW PARTNERSHIPS
AMPLIFY OUTREACH**



LEVITT NETWORK PANEL

Allegra Padilla, Levitt Pavilion Los Angeles, CA

Allie Thut, Levitt AMP Green Bay, WI

Christi Walden, Levitt AMP Springfield, IL

Moderated by Victoria Bridenstine, Levitt Foundation

LEVITT AMP 2019



LEVITT AMP 2023





MEMBERS OF THE LEVITT AMP COMMITTEE





HYPE TEAM



PROGRAMMING & PARTNERSHIPS



PROGRAMMING & PARTNERSHIPS





LEVITT AMP SPRINGFIELD

PARTNERSHIPS

Christi H. Walden



- Springfield, IL population is approximately 120,000
This includes a few, small surrounding communities
- This is our FIFTH season as an AMP site
(2019-Present, no 2020 season)
- I started helping in 2019 as a Green Room volunteer
- I am the THIRD Chairwoman for the Series
We now have co-chairs because collaboration is key!
- Our proposed budget is around \$200,000 for the 2024 season
This accounts for in-kind and cash sponsorships
- We averaged 1,100 concertgoers per night in 2023
- This is HARD WORK! Kudos to everyone getting it done!

GRASSROOTS OUTREACH PARTNERSHIP

Faith Coalition for the Common Good's
Ntosake Women's Group

Levitt AMP Springfield Partner
2022-Present



GRASSROOTS OUTREACH PARTNERSHIP

Faith Coalition for the Common Good's
Ntosake Women's Group

THIS IS A PAID PARTNERSHIP

Levitt AMP Springfield and the Urban
Action Network pay FCCG for this effort.

When I learned this, I asked myself...

WHY?

I'll get back to that.



URBAN ACTION NETWORK

The Urban Action Network (UAct) spurs revitalization in Springfield's urban core by advancing and supporting community and economic development strategies and initiatives.



FAITH COALITION FOR THE COMMON GOOD (FCCG)

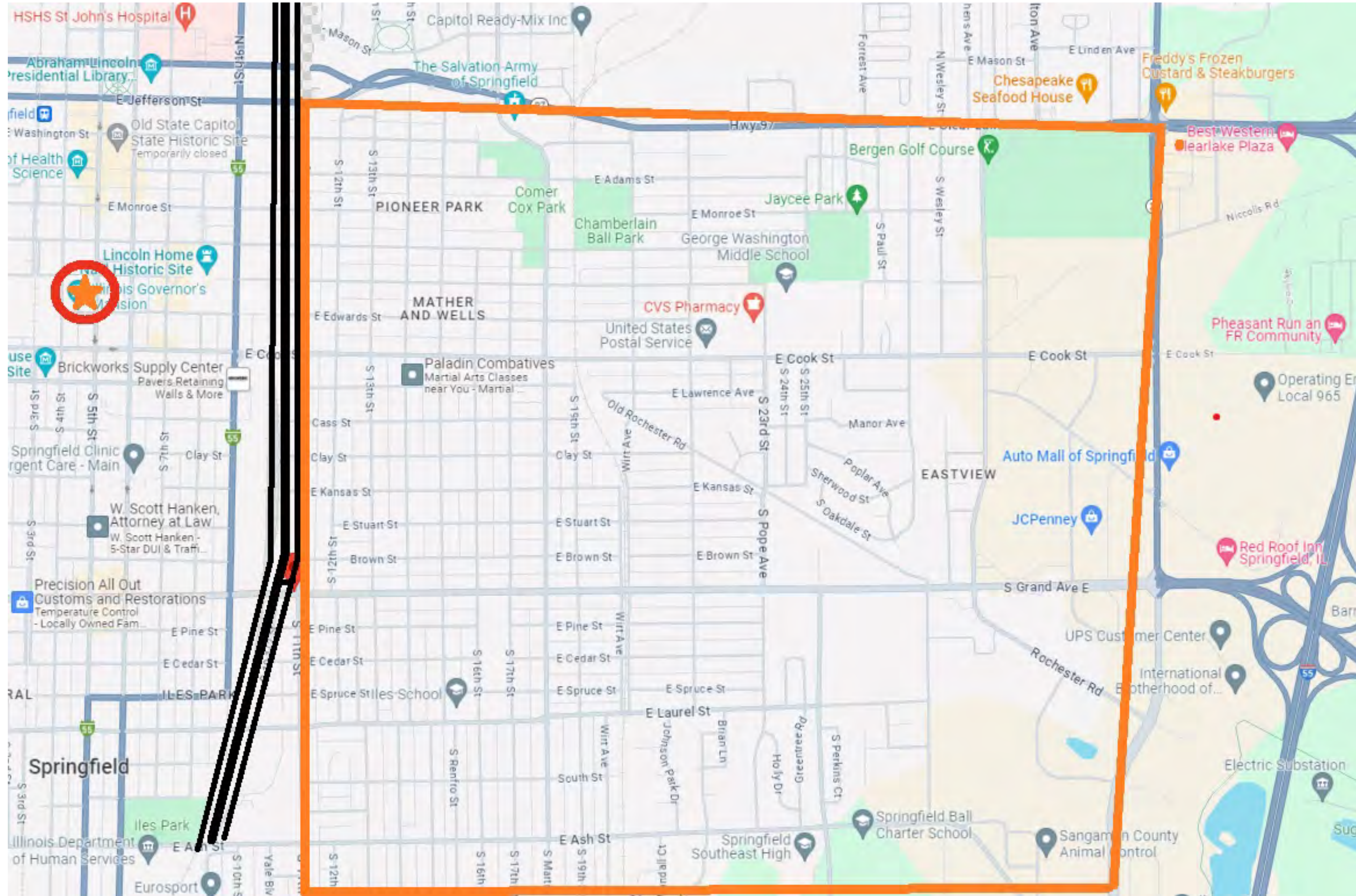
We are a coalition of faith communities, community organizations and individuals working collaboratively for racial equity, civic engagement, a fair economy and participatory decision-making.



NTOSAKE WOMEN'S GROUP

NTOSAKE is a national women's leadership and training program. Each local group of women is known as a "Pride."

Ntosake" (En-too-Sahk-ee) is a South African word loosely translated to mean "she who walks with lions; she who comes with her own things."



SIGNED AGREEMENT

Before the Series

- Provide feedback on printed materials and social media elements needed for outreach
- FCCG Leadership team participates in general Levitt planning
- Identify target neighborhoods/areas/businesses
- Promote attendance PRIOR to the Series through door-to-door canvassing and distribution of printed materials to agreed upon groups
 - *General* - churches, social clubs, colleges, barber/beauty shops, currency exchanges, events, residential complexes
 - *Specific Locations*

SIGNED AGREEMENT

During the Series

- FCCG/Ntosake may set up a tent with information about their programs
- Ntosake team will attend all concerts and participate as needed
 - Welcome concertgoers, distribute programs, conduct/collect surveys

After the Series

- FCCG/Ntosake will submit a brief final report to the funders detailing the services provided under the contract

GRASSROOTS OUTREACH PARTNERSHIP

Faith Coalition for the Common Good's
Ntosake Women's Group

What did I learn about

WHY?

- We invested in underinvested communities
- Empowered Women of Color to incorporate themselves into our community, in the identified neighborhoods, and into our Series
- It is important for members of all our communities to see themselves involved in our Series

THIS PARTNERSHIP EMPOWERED...



Faith Coalition for the Common Good



Ntosake Women's Group



Levitt AMP Springfield



Our Community

- Great moments were seeing those we spoke to at their doors attend concerts
 - We saw community relationships built right before our eyes
- In both 2022 and 2023, 20 women from Springfield Ntosake's Women's group were able to attend a National Ntosake Training
 - Springfield's Pride was able to host their FIRST leadership conference



COMMUNITY!
@LEVITTAMPSPI

**“COMMUNITY ROW”
PARTNERSHIPS**

- In 2022 we started “Makers’ Row” based on an email from a community member
 - The idea was a weekly pop-up for **local** makers and curators
 - Vendors had a minimal buy-in, and we had a good turnout
 - We didn’t see the same response from vendors in 2023
 - We decided to **CHANGE THE FOCUS** of who was getting space on the lawn
 - We made a change to further **ACTIVATE** the space, minimizing the number of Makers’ tents and adding some new partners



“It’s not about ideas. It’s about making ideas happen.”

Scott Branson

- We wanted **MORE COMMUNITY-FOCUSED** organizations on the lawn
- Not everyone can come and make a purchase, but everyone can come and learn about programs and services available in our area
- We wanted a **FREE** platform for orgs and businesses to expose themselves to a more diverse audience – **those who need served and those who wish to serve**
- The “life of the lawn” isn’t just about the music. It’s about creating a space where people feel welcome and included. We need to use the space and resources to educate and reach out to those who may not have access to similar experiences



“It’s not about ideas. It’s about making ideas happen.”

Scott Branson

- One of our volunteers, Jenna, asked to spearhead the change
- We developed a statement of purpose and an online application process
 - A community group is defined as a non-profit, charitable, and/or educational organization that provides public service(s)
 - We approved partner organizations whose missions align with those of the National Levitt Foundation and the local music series

This is Jenna! 



“It’s not about ideas. It’s about making ideas happen.”

Scott Branson

- We were intentional about several points
 - All groups must feature an activity or service that engages the concertgoers that highlights the partner's mission. Examples include games, photo-booths, crafts, face painting, community art piece, and wellness services.
 - All partners must have a tent, table and chairs (we helped where needed)
 - Groups were not allowed to distribute religious or political propaganda
 - Organizations could partner up to share space and resources if needed
 - Limited the number of concerts per group based on demand



MORE THAN 25 ORGANIZATIONS JOINED US IN 2023!!!

ILLINOIS SYMPHONY
YOUTH ORCHESTRAS





WHAT'S NEW FOR 2024?

A SOCIAL MEDIA "STREET TEAM"...



THANK YOU

Christi Walden

levitt@downtownspringfield.org

@levittampSPI





LEVERAGING
PARTNERSHIPS
TO BUILD
COMMUNITY
THROUGH
MUSIC IN
MACARTHUR
PARK &
BEYOND

LEVITT LA

Levitt LA opening day 2023, by Farah Sosa

A woman in a blue dress and patterned shawl is performing a dance on stage. She is kneeling on one knee, with her arms extended in a graceful pose. The background shows a blurred audience and stage lights.

PARTNERSHIP VALUES

- Reflecting on lessons learned
- Historical context
- Understanding the communities we are working with
- Power & Privilege
- The importance of showing up beyond the concert season
- Long-term & reciprocal as the goal
- Cross-sector buy in



Levitt LA Community Advisory Council 2023

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

- 20+ active organizations
- Arts and non-arts organizations participate
- Year-round feedback loop
- United in the mission to uplift MacArthur Park and creating collaborations to improve the quality of life for people
- 85-90% of the participants support Levitt LA by hosting outreach tables, sponsoring or partnering



Mundo Maya Day 2023, courtesy of the Mundo Maya Foundation

CO-CURATORS

- Shifting the power dynamic of what it means to be a presenter
- Sharing curatorial control especially in the realm of cultural heritage preservation work.
- Learning from one another
- Offering support and access, acknowledging there is a spectrum of experience in organizing concerts
- Acknowledging there needs to be funding to support equitable involvement in the Many groups are BIPOC & volunteer led.



Mujeres de la Tierra tabling 2023, photo by Farah Sosa

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Organizations who want to connect with the audience
- Offering important resources in a historically under resourced area
- Fundraising element- sliding scale approach no one turned away for lack of funds
- Creating a welcoming environment
- Support with outreach
- Providing Community Partners a platform to share out about their work



Natives in the Now 2023, photo courtesy of United American Indian Involvement Inc.

LAWN ACTIVATION

- Supporting local, BIPOC business owners
- They in turn serve as ambassadors and promote to their networks
- Offering accessible price points for vendors and audience
- Different activities to engage all ages- Arts Education Partners
- Creating a sense of belonging
- Fundraising opportunity- collective buy-in
- Reflects and connects to what is onstage



SOME 2024 GOALS

25k attendance=larger acts that resonate with the audience

Deepening and expanding strategic partnerships ex: Metro shuttles

Working to uplift MacArthur Park esp. cleanliness and public safety

Organizational sustainability & diversifying funding streams

Board growth & engagement

Partnering with outside entities to book food trucks & artesiania vendors

Removing barriers to participation for food vendors – permitting fees via the County

Leveraging more municipal resources

Offering pre-concert audience engagement activities consistently (dance classes, drum circles, dance battles, musical chairs, giveaways)

Wider range of Community Partners- get back up to 50+ participating groups and include more onsite health screenings

CLOSING THOUGHTS

How do you define community?

What does it take to build trust?

What adaptations does your team need to make to meet the need?

How can your team gather feedback from those who may not engage traditionally?

What programmatic risks can be taken to ensure diverse communities have access and representation within the Levitt network?



Outreach Specialist, the MC, Lawn Activation Coordinator & Operations Runner 2023, photo by René Ponce

Breakout Questions

What community groups have you engaged with to help strengthen your outreach efforts? Share successful outcomes and/or challenges that you've encountered during the process.

Breakout Questions

Considering your population size or geographical location, describe partnerships you've developed with individuals, community groups, nonprofit organizations, and/or businesses that may be unique to your locale, and how the partnerships have impacted your outreach efforts.

Breakout Questions

What are other ways that you can build relationships and partnerships that could lead to a more inclusive Levitt music series?

levitt

2024