



**A CULTURAL CELEBRATION OF
HERITAGE, EDUCATION, HISTORY & LIVING EXHIBITS**

AAHCC

WRHS



AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE
& CULTURAL CELEBRATION

Partnership Opportunities

FRIDAY & SATURDAY | AUGUST 21 & 22, 2026



The African American Heritage & Cultural Celebration

AUGUST 21-22, 2026

Cleveland has long been a center of Black
innovation, leadership, and artistic expression.
The African American Heritage & Cultural
Celebration continues that tradition.

The Return of a Cultural Legacy



From 1992 to 2002, **the African American Heritage & Cultural Celebration** (AAHCC) served as an annual premier event amplifying the rich history and lifestyles of Black people living in Northeast Ohio. What started out as a five-hour event, established by the African American Archives Auxiliary (Quad A), on a Saturday afternoon at the Western Reserve Historical Society quickly evolved to a multi-day festival (including a business summit) with upwards of 10k people visiting the museum over the span of the weekend.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Cleveland's first national rap recording artist, Kevin "MC Chill" Heard, who became the first non-New York solo rap artist to chart nationally with a release on the iconic Fever Records. Heard, one of the original members of the AAHCC event team and a longtime journalist with the Call & Post newspaper, now sees project manager RLR III & Associates bringing the celebration back to the Western Reserve Historical Society on Aug. 21 and Aug. 22, 2026.



THE 2026 VISION

Honoring Legacy, Elevating Community

The 2026 AAHCC builds upon this strong foundation with a revitalized mission centered on cultural preservation, community education, and neighborhood empowerment. The celebration seeks to reconnect families and institutions, create meaningful spaces for youth engagement and artistic expression, foster civic pride, and elevate the stories that

have shaped Cleveland's African American identity across generations. The 2026 AAHCC continues its long tradition of elevating culture while investing in Cleveland's future and will feature a dynamic mix of performances, historical exhibitions, oral history reflections, youth programming, artisan vendors, and community dialogue.



What's the opportunity?

The African American Heritage & Cultural Celebration is a great chance to not only showcase this gem of an institution we have right in our backyard, the Cleveland History Center, it is a prime opportunity to educate the next generation on the breadth and depth of the contributions Black Clevelanders have made to this community and the larger society as a whole.

Anchored with both local and national music and entertainment, this event is designed to inspire attendees of all ages, and bridge the connections between the past and present. By becoming a sponsor, you will be supporting the amplification of African American history and culture as well as the importance of having this world-class institution in our community. Your support will afford visitors the chance to learn about inventions by Garrett Morgan, the political achievements of brothers Carl and Louis Stokes, the works of Robert P. Madison, and view the current exhibit on African Americans in healthcare.

Our hope is that by educating youth and adults on the significant contributions made by African Americans, dynamic social change can be sparked. Together, we can elevate a sense of community.



Jane Edna Hunter, Esq



Dr. Zelma George



What's the opportunity?

Audience Snapshot

- 4,000–7,000 attendees expected
- 45% Greater Cleveland
- 35% Northeast Ohio
- 5% national visitors

Audience Profile

- 25–55 primary age range
- Culture, music, history enthusiasts
- Families + young creatives

Event Experience Overview “What Happens at AAHCC”

- Family History & Genealogy
- Live Music Performances
- Hip Hop Panel
- Cultural Marketplace
- Youth Programming
- Poetry Slam
- Business & Career Fair
- Food Court

Marketing & Media Reach

- Radio partnerships
- Social media campaign
- Cleveland History Center promotion
- Influencer partnerships
- Email marketing
- Community partner promotion
- Event press conference



What's the opportunity?

Your Partnership Supports

- Youth cultural education
- Historical preservation
- Local Black artists and entrepreneurs
- Community storytelling
- Cultural heritage preservation

Why Partner With AAHCC

- Access to **5,000+** culturally engaged attendees
- Direct connection to **Black cultural leadership in Cleveland**
- Brand placement at a **historic cultural institution**
- Engagement with **youth and emerging creatives**
- Alignment with **America 250 cultural programming**

Social Media Campaign Reach

50k – 150k

Press Coverage

10+ outlets

Digital impressions

250k+

African American Heritage & Cultural Celebration return to Western Reserve Historical Society (WRHS), honoring Cleveland Hip-Hop Pioneer Kevin “MC Chill” Heard

The 2026 **African American Heritage & Cultural Celebration** (AAHCC) - one of Cleveland's most significant and influential cultural traditions - will return to the **Western Reserve Historical Society on August 21-22, 2026**, with a renewed vision, expanded leadership, and a powerful mission aligned with WRHS's commitment to preserving and sharing the histories that shape Northeast Ohio.

Revitalized by RLR III & Associates, in collaboration with My Cool Solutions Inc., this year's celebration at the WRHS Cleveland History Center will pay special tribute to the **40th Anniversary of Kevin “MC Chill” Heard becoming Cleveland's first national rap recording artist.**

Heard's groundbreaking success as **“the first non-NYC solo rap act to chart nationally,”** helped propel Hip-Hop beyond its East Coast foundation and onto a wider national and global stage. In addition to his musical legacy, Heard spent more than 25 years as a journalist at the historic **Call & Post Newspaper**, where he documented community stories throughout Greater Cleveland.

A LEGACY OF CELEBRATION AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION

The African American Heritage & Cultural Celebration traces its origins to **1992-2002**, when the African American Archives Auxiliary of the Western Reserve Historical Society - under the visionary leadership of **Dr. Booker T. Tall** - launched a community-centered celebration devoted to African American history, culture, and creativity. Over a decade, it grew from a small one-day program into a WRHS **signature event**, attracting thousands of guests and transforming how Cleveland's Black community engaged with the Western Reserve Historical Society.

In **2012**, the tradition expanded into the neighborhood through the **Fairfax Arts & Heritage Celebration**, held along East 89th Street between Carnegie and Quincy Avenues. That event honored Fairfax's rich cultural landscape - from



Cleveland History Center, headquarters for Western Reserve Historical Society.

its legendary entertainment venues to its civic institutions - reinforcing the importance of neighborhood storytelling and local heritage.

Honorary Co-Chairs

The 2026 AAHCC also reflects global Hip-Hop impact and civic commitment through its Honorary Co-Chairs. **Chuck D (Carlton Douglas Ridenhour)**, Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee and founding member of rap group Public Enemy, joins **Roxanne Shanté (Lolita Gooden)**, pioneering Hip-Hop icon, one of the first female stars of the genre and the subject of the Netflix biopic Roxanne. They are joined by **Cleveland Ward 9 City Councilman Kevin Conwell**, a respected civic leader, musician, and longtime arts advocate.

- Chuck D (Carlton Douglas Ridenhour)
- Roxanne Shanté (Lolita Gooden)
- Congresswoman Shontel Brown
- Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb
- Juanita O. Brent, State Representative, District 18
- Cuyahoga County Executive Chris Ronane
- County Councilwoman Yvonne Conwell District 7 Vice Chairperson
- County Councilwoman Meredith Turner, District 9
- Blaine A. Griffin, Cleveland City Council President and Ward 6 Councilman
- Councilman Joe Jones, Ward 1
- Mayor Erica L. Nickolic of Oakwood Village
- Randell McShepard, Vice President - Public Affairs & Chief Talent Officer of RPM, International
- John O. Horton "DJ Johnny O", Nerve DJ's.



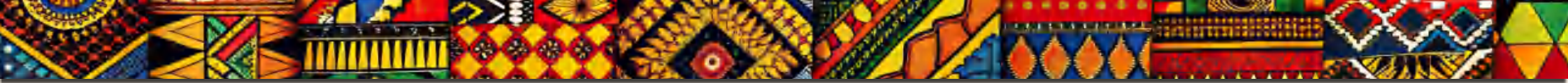
America 250

2026 marks the 250th anniversary of the United States of America. This Semiquincentennial, also known as America 250, marks a time to acknowledge our nation's past and to imagine our shared future. Ohio is fully embracing this opportunity with an appointed America 250-Ohio Commission planning themed events across the state throughout the year. The AAHCC aligns with the August Theme "Ohio Goes to the Fair" celebrating fairs and festivals in that month.

General Co-Chairs

The 2026 AAHCC is guided by a distinguished slate of General Co-Chairs representing institutions deeply rooted in cultural stewardship, neighborhood revitalization, and historical preservation: **Kelly Falcone-Hall**, President and CEO of the Western Reserve Historical Society; **Kate Borders**, President of University Circle, Inc.; and **Terri Hamilton Brown**, Executive Director of the St. Clair Superior Development Corporation. Their collective leadership anchors this celebration firmly in the city's cultural and civic landscape.

- Kelly Falcone-Hall, President and CEO of the Western Reserve Historical Society
- Kate Borders, President of University Circle, Inc.
- Terri Hamilton Brown, Executive Director of the St. Clair Superior Development Corporation
- Ward 9 City Councilman Kevin Conwell
- Arlene Anderson, Community Champion
- Teresa Metcalf Beasley, Esq., McDonald Hopkins
- Tracy L. Jones, Bureau Chief AHC.



AAHCC Team

WRHS

Kelly Falcone-Hall, President & CEO of the WRHS

Glenn Anderson, Jr, Sr. Vice President, Advancement

Angie Lowrie, Director, Cleveland History Center

PROJECT MANAGERS COMMITTEE

R. L. Render III, President & CEO, RLR III & Associates.

Vicki Dansby, Primary Associate

Kevin "Chill" Heard, Associate

Barbara Brown, Associate

Rhonda Crowder, Associate

ENTERTAINMENT COMMITTEE

Kevin "Chill" Heard, Chairman & Exec. Dir. of My Cool Solutions, Inc.

Felicia C. Hanney, Vice-Chairperson

Earl "Smooth" Darren 1st Vice Chair

Roy Dunnican, 2nd Vice-Chair

Johnnie Dent, Jr 3rd Vice-Chair

Leola Daniels, 4th Vice-Chair

Main Stage Manager, Anthony Acklin "Sweet Dirty Tone"

Poetry Slam Stage Manager, Jerrod Amir Shakir

Hay Garden Stage Manager, Vince Robinson

Earl Dareen Roberts "Smooth"

Valerie Renee Battle "Val"

Tracie Potts

Angela Shute Woodson, City of Cleveland

Michael Williams, "Shango 7"

Rich Wiess

Amos Wesley Turner "Red"

Eric Wilson

Kelly MJ Andrews

Shelli Reeves

John L. Malcolm IV

BUDGET & FUND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

RLR III & Associates

WRHS Senior Staff

Honorary Co-Chairs

General Co-Chairs

SAFETY & SECURITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Tom Wetzel, UCI

WRHS Chief of Security

Marvin Cross, Sr. Retired CPD Commander

LOGISTICS COMMITTEE

Vicki Dansby, Chairperson

Samuel D. Dickerson, Vice Chairperson

VOLUNTEERS COMMITTEE

Barbara Jones- Brown, Chairperson

Yvette Wynn, Vice Chairperson

Greg DeVine, Assistant Chairperson

VENDORS COMMITTEE

Janice "Jan" Ridgeway Chairperson

Carlos Latimer Vice Chair

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Valerie "Val 1" Battle, Chairperson

Earl Roberts "Smooth", Co-Chair

PERSONAL & STAFFING COMMITTEE

Samuel D. Dickerson, Chairperson

Vice Chair (TBD)

PR, MARKETING COMMITTEE

Rhonda Crowder, Chairperson

Felicia Hanney, Vice Chairperson

CHILDREN'S VILLAGE COMMITTEE

Chairperson (TBD)

Dr. Mary Manning, Vice Chairperson

NATIONAL/LOCAL HIP HOP LEGENDS PANEL DISCUSSION COMMITTEE

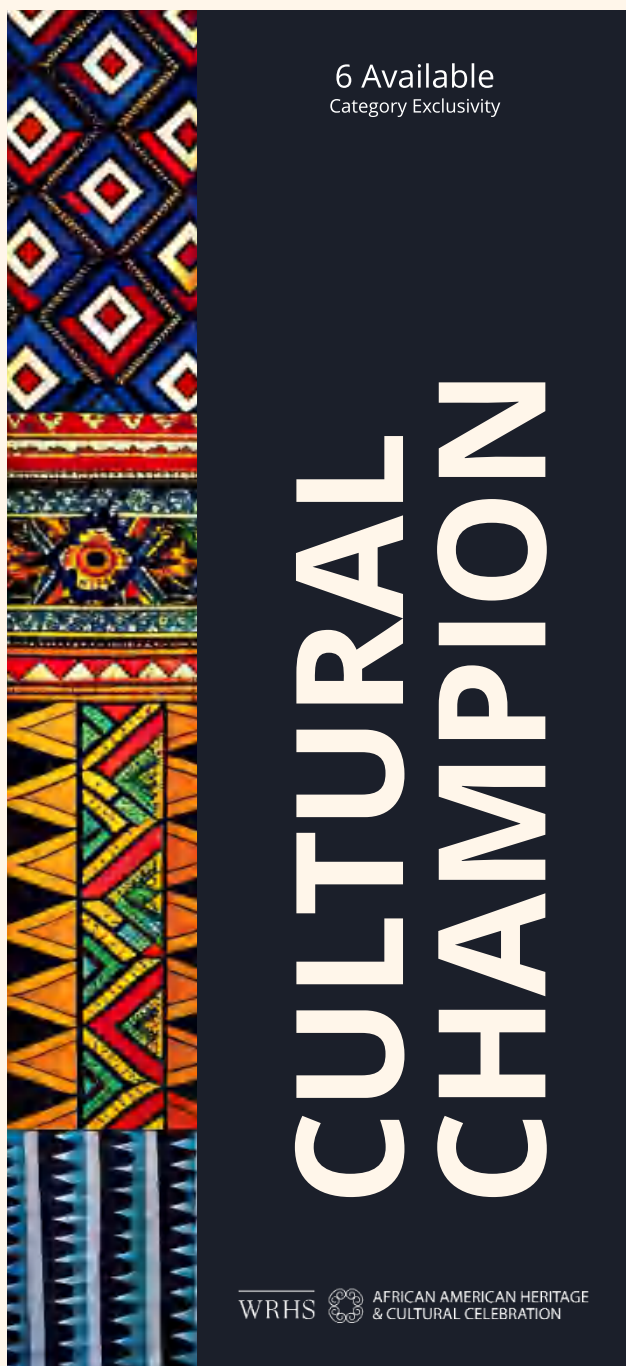
Tracie Potts, Chairperson

Michael Williams, "Shango 7" Vice Chairman for Chill and his entertainment committee.



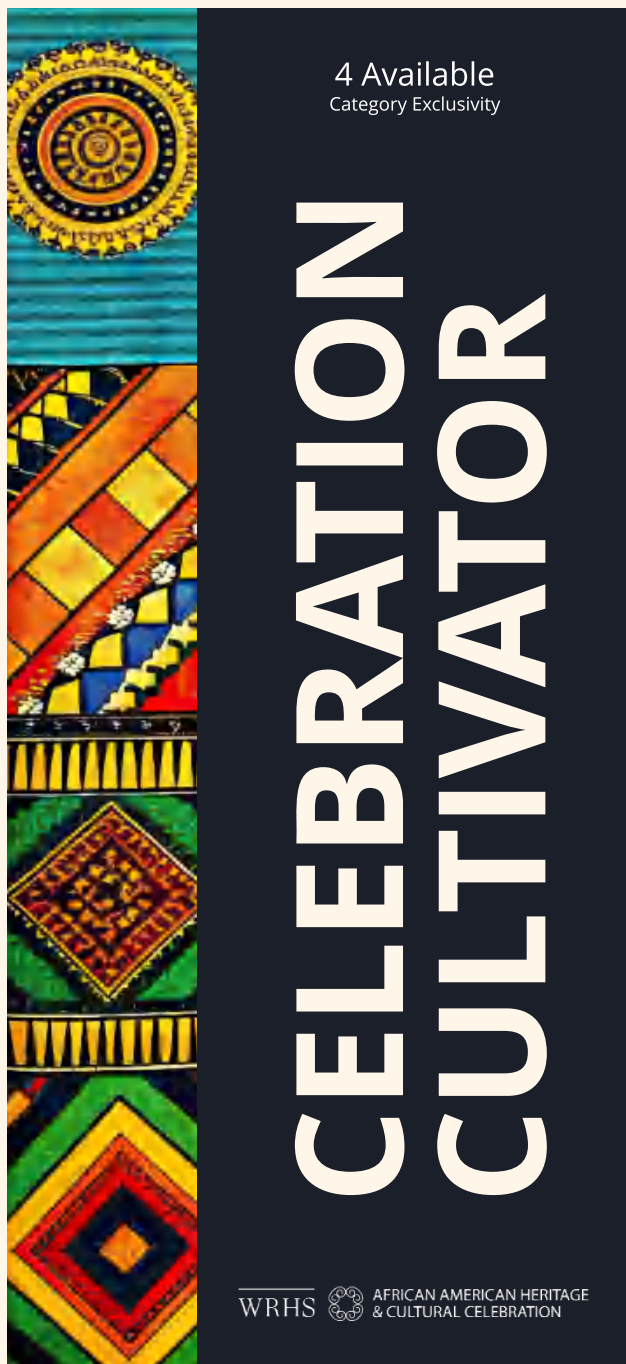
\$50,000

- Prominent Logo placement as the Title or Presenting Sponsor of the AAHCC on all marketing materials
- Naming Rights of the Main Stage or Poetry Slam Stage (Hanna Garden)
- Prominent Stage Signage on your selected stage
- Prominent Logo placement on all event signage and event map
- Prominent Logo and Link placement on AAHCC web-page
- Prominent Logo placement on event tee-shirts
- Name listed as the Title or Presenting Sponsor on all Media Releases
- Name mentioned as the Title or Presenting Sponsor on all media platforms
- Opportunity for one (1) media pitch
- Recognition from the main stage and poetry slam stage
- Speaking opportunity on your selected stage
- Photo opportunities with National Hip Hop Artists and other dignitaries/celebrities
- Two (2) Social Media Feature Reels on all platforms
- Unlimited Social Media Mentions on all platforms
- Ten (10) invitations to the National Hip Hop Panel Discussion & Reception on 8/21
- Ten (10) admissions into the VIP Circle
- Five (5) VIP Parking Passes
- Opportunity to provide branded credential lanyards
- Opportunity to place items in VIP swag bags
- Pioneer Sponsor gift
- One (1) Prime Vendor/Informational table
- Recognition on Western Reserve Historical Society (WRHS) website as a donor
- One (1) Free rental of WRHS facility only (does not include catering or alcohol)
- One (1) Corporate Meeting Room Rental at the Cleveland History Center (CHC)
- Ten (10) Free Admission tickets to the CHC or Hale Farm & Village
- Twenty (20) Percent discount on employee memberships for WRHS through 12/31/26
- Ten (10) Percent discount on CHC museum purchases through 12/31/26



\$25,000

- Premium Logo placement as a Sponsor of the AAHCC on all marketing materials
- Naming Rights (Title or Presenting) of your choice of:
 - VIP Circle
 - Children's Village
 - Food Court
- Premium Signage as the Title or Presenting Sponsor at the VIP Circle; Children's Village or Food Court
- Premium Logo placement on all event signage and event map
- Premium Logo placement on AAHCC web-page
- Premium Logo placement on event tee-shirts
- Name listed as a Sponsor on all Media Releases
- Recognition from the main stage and poetry slam stage (Hanna Garden)
- Photo opportunities with National Hip Hop Artists and other dignitaries/celebrities
- One (1) Social Media Feature Reel on all platforms
- Unlimited Social Media Mentions on all platforms
- Four (4) invitations to the National Hip Hop Panel Discussion & Reception on 8/21
- Four (4) admissions into the VIP Circle
- Two (2) VIP Parking Passes
- Opportunity to place items in VIP swag bags
- One (1) Prime Vendor/Informational table
- One (1) Corporate Meeting Room Rental at the Cleveland History Center (CHC)
- Four (4) Free Admission tickets to the CHC or Hale Farm & Village
- Twenty (20) Percent discount on employee memberships for WRHS through 12/31/26
- Ten (10) Percent discount on CHC museum purchases through 12/31/26



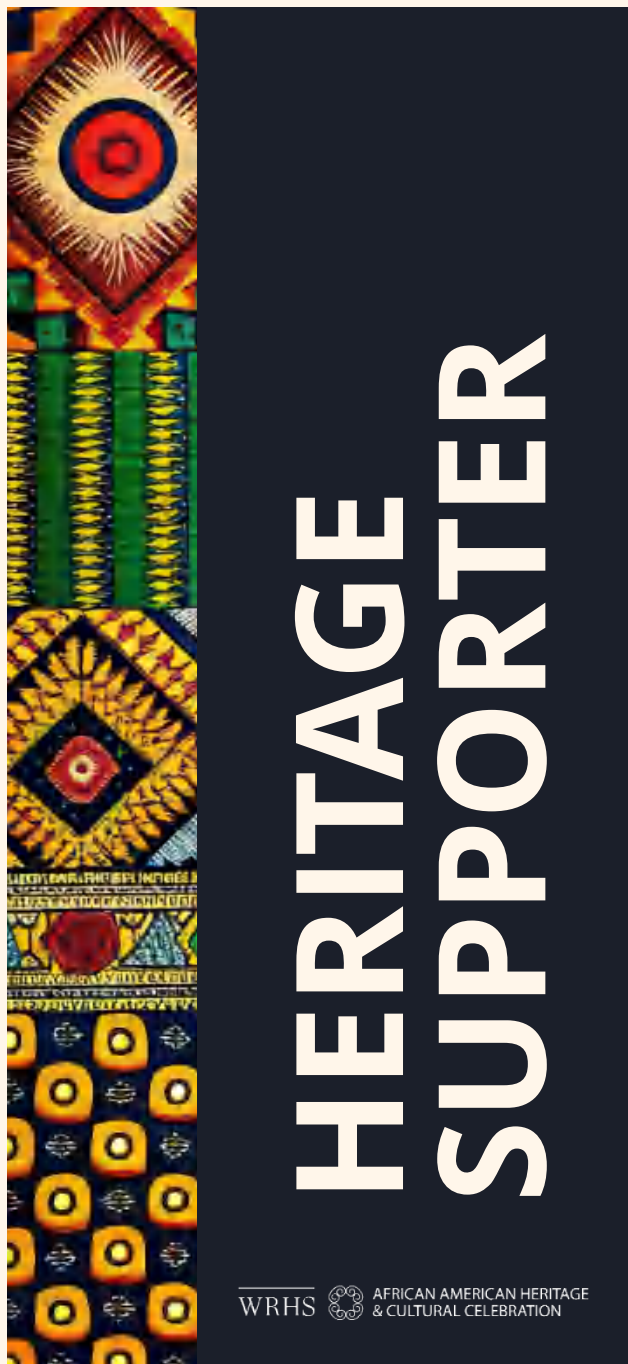
\$15,000

- Logo placement as a Sponsor of the AAHCC on all marketing materials
- Naming Rights (Title or Presenting) of your choice of:
 - Cleveland's Got Talent Stage (Hay Garden)
 - Cultural Pop-Up Market
- Premium Signage as the Title or Presenting Sponsor your choice of naming area above
- Social Media Mentions on all platforms
- Logo placement on all event signage and event map
- Logo placement on AAHCC web-page
- Logo placement on event tee-shirts
- Two (2) invitations to the National Hip Hop Panel Discussion & Reception on 8/21
- Two (2) admissions into the VIP Circle
- One (1) Prime Vendor/Informational table
- Twenty (20) Percent discount on employee memberships for WRHS through 12/31/26
- Ten (10) Percent discount on CHC museum purchases through 12/31/26



\$10,000

- Logo placement as a Sponsor of the AAHCC on all marketing materials
- Logo placement on all event signage and event map
- Logo placement on AAHCC web-page
- Logo placement on event tee-shirts
- Two (2) invitations to the National Hip Hop Panel Discussion & Reception on 8/21
- One (1) Prime Vendor/Informational table
- Twenty (20) Percent discount on employee memberships for WRHS through 12/31/26
- Ten (10) Percent discount on CHC museum purchases through 12/31/26

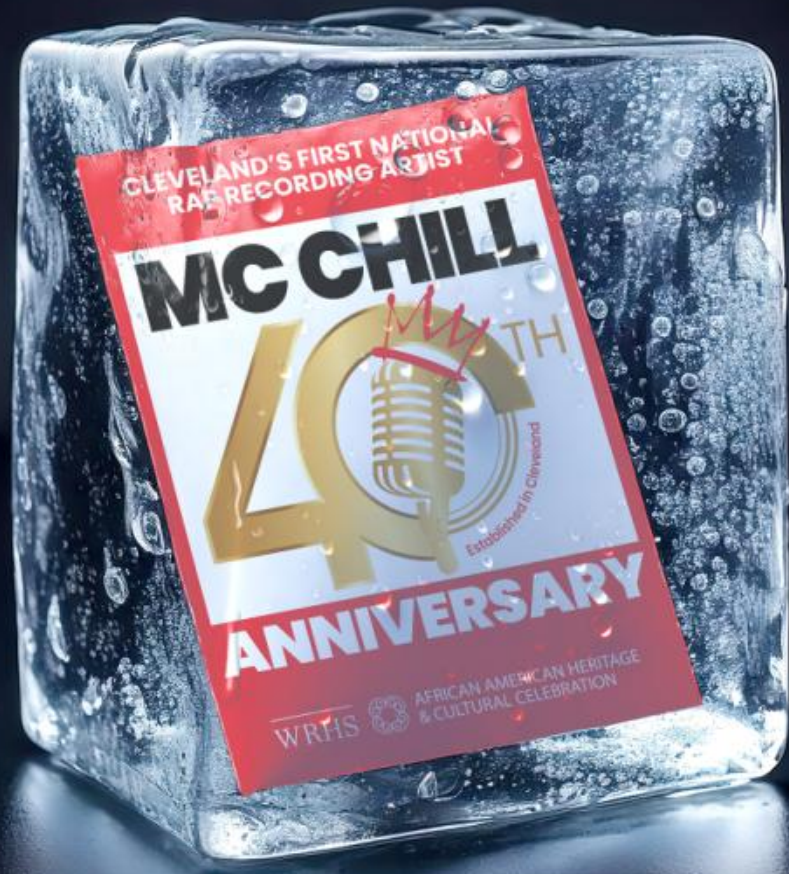
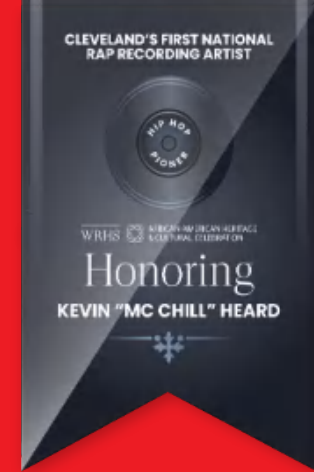


\$5,000

- Logo placement as a Sponsor of the AAHCC on all marketing materials
- Logo placement on all event signage and event map
- Logo placement on AAHCC web-page
- One (1) Prime Vendor/Informational table
- Twenty (20) Percent discount on employee memberships for CHC through 12/31/26
- Fifteen(15) Percent discount on CHC museum purchases through 12/31/26



MC CHILL ANNIVERSARY + HIP HOP PANEL DISCUSSION



VIP RECEPTION & PANEL DISCUSSION

CLEVELAND'S FIRST NATIONAL RAP RECORDING ARTIST



Kevin "MC Chill" Heard

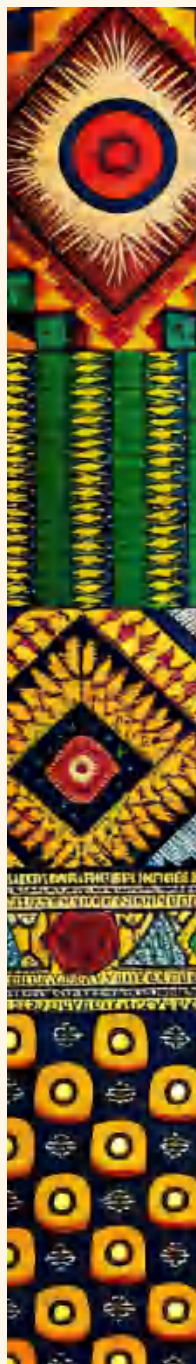
FRIDAY

AUGUST 21, 2026

MODERATED BY
JAY QUAN

Historian of the National
Hip-Hop Museum,
Washington, D.C.

WRHS  AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE
& CULTURAL CELEBRATION



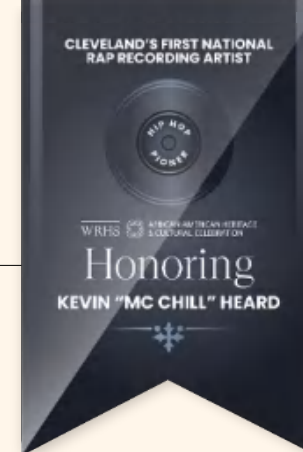
2 Available
Category Exclusivity

HIP HOP INFLUENCER

WRHS  AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE
& CULTURAL CELEBRATION

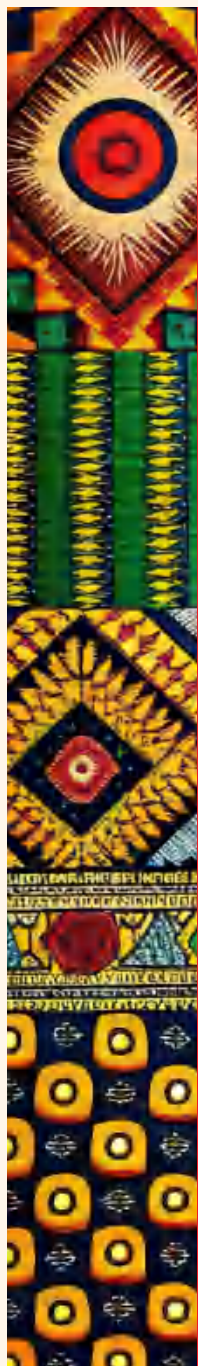
\$5,000

- Logo placement as a Sponsor of the AAHCC on all marketing materials
- Naming Rights (Title or Presenting) of the National Hip Hop Panel & Reception
- Premium Signage as the Title or Presenting Sponsor at the National Hip Hop Panel & Reception
- Speaking opportunity on National Hip Hop Panel stage
- Photo opportunities with National Hip Hop Artists and other dignitaries/celebrities
- Two (2) Social Media Feature Reels on all platforms
- Unlimited Social Media Mentions on all platforms
- Logo placement on all AAHCC signage and event map
- Logo placement on AAHCC web-page
- Ten (10) invitations to the National Hip Hop Panel Discussion & Reception
- Two (2) admissions into the AAHCC VIP Circle
- One (1) Prime Vendor/Informational table
- Twenty (20) Percent discount on employee memberships for WRHS through 12/31/26
- Ten (10) Percent discount on CHC museum purchases through 12/31/26



HONORING HIP HOP PIONEER KEVIN "MC CHILL" HEARD

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 2026



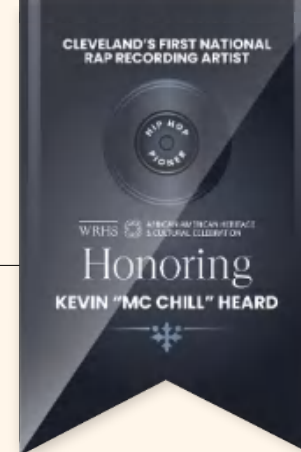
4 Available
Category Exclusivity

BUSINESS INFLUENCER

WRHS  AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE
& CULTURAL CELEBRATION

\$2,500

- Logo placement as a Sponsor of the AAHCC on all marketing materials
- Naming Rights (Title or Presenting) of your choice of:
 - Heritage & Culture Business Fair
 - Heritage & Culture Career Fair
- Premium Signage as the Title or Presenting Sponsor at the Heritage & Culture Business Fair or Heritage & Culture Career Fair
- Social Media Mentions on all platforms
- Logo placement all AAHCC signage and event map
- Logo placement on AAHCC web-page
- Two (2) invitations to the National Hip Hop Panel Discussion & Reception
- Two (2) admissions into the VIP Circle
- One (1) Prime Vendor/Informational table
- Twenty (20) Percent discount on employee memberships for WRHS through 12/31/26
- Ten (10) Percent discount on CHC



HONORING HIP HOP PIONEER KEVIN "MC CHILL" HEARD

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 2026



Carl & Louis Stokes

AUGUST 21-22, 2026

AAHCC

Become a Partner

To secure your partnership

Contact :

Robert L. Render, III
AAHCC Project Manager

rlrender@sbcglobal.net
216.548.7707

Vicki Dansby
AAHCC Project Manager

imaginethtent@gmail.com
216.288.3656

Partnership Opportunities Deadline

July 20, 2026

WRHS is 501(c)(3) organization. Tax ID# 34-0714724. Your donation is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

An acknowledgement of the total amount of your gifts will be sent to you for your records.

MAIL COMPLETED FORM TO:

WESTERN RESERVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

10825 EAST BOULEVARD
CLEVELAND, OH 44106

Please contact Glenn Anderson, Jr.
Senior VicePresident of
Advancement at
gandersonjr@wrhs.org, or
216.721.5722, ext. 1401, with any
questions.

AAHCC

**THE AFRICAN AMERICAN
HERITAGE & CULTURAL
CELEBRATION**

RLR III & Associates 


AFRICAN · AMERICAN · ARCHIVES · AUXILIARY

SPONSORSHIP FORM

Please accept my support of The African American Heritage & Cultural Celebration

☐ Amount \$ _____

Please contact Glenn Anderson, Jr., Senior Vice President of Advancement, at 216-721-5722 extension 1401 to discuss naming opportunities.

About you

Name/s _____
as you would like to be recognized in the WRHS Donor Recognition Report and the IHG Gallery

☐ Check here if you would like your gift to be listed as "Anonymous"

Address _____ City/State/ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

Payment information

Please invoice me (WRHS will contact you to set up your preferred payment schedule)

☐ Check enclosed \$ _____

☐ Please charge \$ _____ ☐ Visa ☐ MC ☐ AMEX ☐ Discover

Account # _____ Exp. Date _____ Security Code _____

Name on card _____

Signature _____