



Press Release
Umoja Committee

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2018 Johnson City, Umoja Festival, September 7-8 Features Grand Marshall Nicole Collins, Chief of Police at ETSU Department of Public Safety and Headliner “We Are One” Tribute Band.

JOHNSON CITY – ETSU is partnering with the Umoja Cultural Arts Committee for the Umoja Festival, being held in downtown Johnson City on Friday, September 7 and Saturday, September 8, 2018.

Daytime activities on both Friday, September 7 and Saturday September 8 will feature a children’s area with a petting zoo as well as STEAM interactive activities, boxing demonstrations, wrestling, a selection of festival food and merchandise vendors featuring artwork, jewelry, clothing and arts and crafts. Throughout the festival and capping off each night will be a selection of bands and musicians from rock and roll, rhythm and blues, and gospel music.

The theme for the 2018 **Children’s Fun Zone** is Science and Arts. Several community organizations have teamed up with Umoja to help kick off this free area. This year we will feature learning activities presented by our friends at Hands-On Museum, Gray Fossil Site, and Tinkergarten. The Triple H Petting Zoo is returning and bringing along some friendly animals

for the children to enjoy. Umoja longtime partners at the McKinney Center will be creating children crafts with various art projects. Quantum Leap is setting up four inflatables. The Type Writer Tour is making a stop with their cool machines. The super popular “Slime-Making” and “Giant Bubble” stations are back, along with plenty of games and prizes and enough free cotton candy and popcorn to go around.

The Friday evening Main Stage lineup will open with Niswonger Children’s Hospital spokesperson and Liberty Bell Middle School student, **Patience Gardner** and include the **Calling of Drums** with Rev. Vincent Dial, New Orleans’ **Zulu Connection with Shaka and the Watoto Dancers** performing throughout the day, a **Block Party with DJs Sterl the Pearl & Breeze** and **Top Celebrity Reggae Band** from Pensacola, Florida,.

The Friday night headliner is **The Umoja Band**. Although their name is the same as that of the festival, this band comes to us out of Atlanta, Georgia. In the spirit of some of the greatest vocal groups of all time, Manhattan Transfer, Gladys Knight and the Pips, Abba, The Supremes and The Temptations, the Umoja band is a five member vocal powerhouse, plus five of the funkier musicians you will ever see. Umoja has a fully choreographed show plus stage lights and several costume changes. Umoja's extensive repertoire covers a wide variety of music from the timeless classics, to the wonderful sounds of Motown, to the latest dance songs of today. Umoja has also performed as the opening act for recording artists such as; The Commodores, Jerry Butler, Peabo Bryson, Jennifer Holiday and OutKast. **DJs Sterl the Pearl** will close out Friday night.

Saturday, September 8 will begin with the **annual parade** leading off from the Carver Recreation Center at 10am, ending in downtown Johnson City at the Umoja Unity Festival Main Stage. The Grand Marshall for this year's Umoja Unity Festival Parade will be none other than ETSU's Department of Public Safety Chief of Police, Nicole Collins!

The Gospel Showcase will grace the main stage from 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. on Saturday afternoon, showcasing Friendship Baptist Church Choir, T.R. and Carla Dunn, Thankful Baptist Church's Powerful Expressions of Praise Mime, and featuring Cary Steward. Following the Gospel Showcase, **DJ Sterl the Pearl** will play hits from the main stage. **DJ Breeze** will also rock the youth stage throughout the day on Saturday. Offstage, children and adults can enjoy **storytelling** in the Children's Zone and at the Gazebo.

Saturday night the main stage will feature from Atlanta, Georgia, **Xavier Lewis**. Xavier Lewis's big break came when he became an international sensation in 2008 on NBC's "America Got Talent". Then, in January of 2011 Xavier became the Grand Prize Winner of the Georgia Lottery All Access Music Search for POP/R&B. It has been Xavier's humble focus, dedicated determination, inspiring perseverance and never-ending work ethic that's always kept his eyes pressed toward the mark. With the accolades, the charisma, the voice and the talents, this Singer-Songwriter, Actor, Philanthropist, Entrepreneur and creative Visionary, is truly an aspiring Legend who has caught the eye of both the industry and its consumers. He's accomplished many great feats already but continues to pursue his dream and now the only thing left for this steadily rising R&B star to do is to bring soul back to R&B.

The featured headliner for the Main Stage Saturday night will be **We Are One Tribute Band**. WE ARE ONE TRIBUTE BAND replicates the look, sound and feelings of the 70's Soul groups. This eight-piece band with each of its unique members provides an amazing on stage chemistry. These veteran musicians pride themselves on giving their audience an incredible high-energy performance each and every time they take the stage. The band is led by National Recording Drummer ELWarren "Spoon" Weatherspoon and features lead vocalist, Paul Bumbry, who has the amazing voice range and movement of his life-long idol Frankie Beverly. WE ARE ON TRIBUTE BAND highlights all the hit songs that everyone knows and loves and has the ability to perform and give the audience the true concert experience. Their performance is professional and highly engaging for their audience. Everything heard during their performance is live with no pre-recorded tracks used.

Visit umojajc.org for festival information, news and schedules.