

Dear Friends of Amistad,

The sounds of the Caribbean fill us with joy! There is the cha-cha-cha rhythm of “Oye Como Va.” The musically memorable mentions of Cuban towns in “Chan Chan.” The soothing son cubano style of “El Manisero” (The Peanut Vendor). Yet many youth in our community are never exposed to this beautiful music and poignant lyrics. And they never get to experience the rich culture that spawned these songs and others.

That is why we are launching Amistad, a community-funded initiative to bring the music and culture of the Caribbean into the lives of young people in the City of Cleveland. Our young musicians are members of Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland, whose band program will be enhanced with a repertoire of Afro-Cuban music. The songs will be the tool to expand cultural horizons, musical skill, and, most importantly, young minds.

We will launch this initiative with an evening celebration of exquisite Cuban music on Saturday, October 6, with Sammy Deleon y su orquesta featuring Jackie Warren on piano. Our goal for the evening is to raise the first \$20,000 necessary to launch this important and needed artistic program. Young people from our community’s poorest neighborhoods face a multitude of barriers as they grow up – music and culture are tools that can transform their lives.

Amistad will tap the exceptional talents of local professional musicians and educators who have developed deep expertise in Afro-Cuban music. Programming during the academic year will be infused with the sounds, culture, and history of the Caribbean. In the summer of 2019, we aspire to offer a four-week intensive summer camp in this musical genre and then take a select group of our young musicians to Cuba to experience firsthand a new country and culture. From there, we aim to make connections that are mutually enriching, setting the stage for future trips, even bringing young Cuban musicians to Cleveland.

Cleveland is fortunate to have a vibrant music scene dedicated to this art form and the community is willing and eager to share their expertise. Amistad brings them together and connects our community’s most vulnerable youth to a better life through music and the arts.

Please join us for an exceptional evening of music, food and camaraderie for a better future.

Cordially,



Chris & Monika Chapman