



A Message from the Cherry Hill Arts & Music Waterfront Festival Marking the Convergence of National and Community Milestones—the United States’ 250th Anniversary, the 100th Anniversary of the Movement that Gave Rise to Black History Month, the 80th Anniversary of the dedication of Cherry Hill Homes, and a Decade of the Festival.

On July 4, 2026, at the 10th Annual Cherry Hill Arts & Music Waterfront Festival, we will not whisper our history—we will lift it high and position it at the center of the American story. As we gather along Baltimore’s Middle Branch Park waterfront at the convergence of the United States’ 250th anniversary, the 100th anniversary of the movement that gave rise to Black History Month, the 80th anniversary of the dedication of Cherry Hill Homes public housing, and a decade of this Festival, one truth rises above all: the future belongs to communities bold enough to claim the power to tell their own stories. We will unapologetically honor, protect, and proclaim the history others have tried to diminish, distort, or erase.

Managed and founded by the Youth Resiliency Institute, the Cherry Hill Arts & Music Waterfront Festival has stood as a guardian of Black history since its inception. The Festival plays a significant role in preserving and celebrating the cultural heritage of Cherry Hill, South Baltimore, Baltimore City, and the entire state of Maryland. More than a celebration, it is a platform for truth-telling—an affirmation that heritage is not only something to remember, but something to invest in, protect, and pass on. By elevating artists, historians, culture bearers, and tradition-keepers, and by fostering meaningful cultural dialogue, we transform public space into living history. Through arts and culture, we exercise community authorship—reclaiming storytelling as economic power, civic presence, and collective memory.

Today, the Cherry Hill Arts & Music Waterfront Festival stands as a cornerstone of Baltimore’s cultural landscape—recognized for its unwavering commitment to artistic excellence, responsible cultural stewardship, and the elevation of African American and African Diaspora voices as essential to Maryland’s identity. Under the leadership of the Youth Resiliency Institute, the work extends far beyond a single day. Through year-round archival initiatives, exhibitions, film screenings, workshops, and intergenerational programming, we affirm a bold principle: a neighborhood’s value is not speculative—it is ancestral, social, cultural, and lived.

Each year, the Festival grows—drawing residents and diverse visitors who seek not only music and art, but connection to the stories of self-determination and courage embodied by Cherry Hill’s pioneering Black families. Founded in 1945 as a home for African-American veterans returning from World War II and the Korean War, Cherry Hill stands as a powerful illustration of both purposeful residential racial segregation and enduring Black resilience within America. The legacy of those families—and the broader story of Black Baltimore—is one of perseverance, innovation, sacrifice, and triumph. Their history is not confined to archives; it lives on this waterfront, in every performance, exhibition, and Youth Resiliency Institute gathering.

As the nation reflects on 250 years, we must confront a defining question: What kind of country do we choose to become when every story is fully told? At the Cherry Hill Arts & Music Waterfront Festival, Baltimore stands strong—not only in celebration, but in stewardship. We invite you to stand strong with us—as we honor the past, unite diverse communities, and protect the legacy that shapes our shared future.

Fanon Hill
Executive Director, The Youth Resiliency Institute
Founder, The Cherry Hill Arts & Music Waterfront Festival