
Common Council President

1st District Alderman



Ashanti Hamilton
City of Milwaukee Common Council

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300+ Strong Movement to host 2nd Annual Community Rally at Sherman Park

Common Council President Ashanti Hamilton announced that the free **300+ Strong Movement Rally** – hosted by a collective of grassroots and youth serving organizations – will take place **Saturday (September 10)** from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Sherman Park.

The **300+ Strong Movement** was launched last year to address the unique challenges and realities Black youths face in Milwaukee. The effort is led by an active group of Black-led organizations committed to working together to provide support to youths connected to Milwaukee’s We Got This Initiative, Running Rebels, Be The Change and Universal Companies. Together they have identified some 300-plus youths, mostly young Black males, coming through their doors on a regular basis. Since 2015, the group has expanded to include and collaborate with other Black-led organizations and initiatives working with black youths in Milwaukee’s hardest hit neighborhoods.

“Often times these groups and individuals and the work they do go unrecognized, largely operating under the radar,” President Hamilton said. “The 300-plus Movement centers and supports them, and truth be told, many of these groups and difference makers are overlooked by local funders and are lacking the capacity to compete with larger, well-connected, and better-resourced organizations with leadership and boards that are not always representative of the communities they serve.”

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Rahim Islam, President/CEO of Universal Companies which co-sponsors the efforts adds, “300+ Strong is the beginning of the functional unity that Milwaukee’s Black community must demonstrate in order to move ourselves forward. We have a lot of work to do and this is just the beginning.”

Given the current climate, this year’s rally will echo the ongoing work rooted in the Campaign for Black Male Achievement and Cities United, two national efforts jointly focused on strengthening local communities’ capacity to reduce violence and improve life outcomes for Black men and boys. The two efforts are locally anchored in-part by Milwaukee’s Black Male Achievement Advisory Council and the City of Milwaukee’s Office of Violence Prevention. Both have been working with the 300+ Strong Movement.

“I have been working with 300+ Strong since its inception. 300 Strong is an example of how we begin to turn the page from the things we’ve encountered this summer and the last three weeks, and is a central component to the city’s commitment to ensuring public safety,” said President Hamilton, who co-chairs the city’s Black Male Achievement Advisory Council. “The movement and its rally on Saturday is more about creating and sustaining a network and continuum of support for young people and their families than just coming together for an event in the park.”

Alderman Khalif J. Rainey, whose 7th Aldermanic District includes Sherman Park and the surrounding neighborhood, said the 300+ Strong Rally is also about connecting residents and stakeholders in a way that can strengthen bonds between neighbors and between blocks. “Seeing your neighbors as counterparts and partners in building a better, safer and stronger neighborhood and community is important,” Alderman Rainey said.

“Events such as the rally provide the necessary venue for communication and for nurturing those important neighborly bonds that can help us build a stronger district, and a more vital city,” Alderman Rainey said.

Victor and Dawn Barnett, Co-Executive Directors of Running Rebels Community Organization, believe an even larger impact could be made collaboratively. They are a key example of how more established and authentically community-based organizations can connect with the grassroots and help link their resources and efforts together.

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"Transformation will not be achieved by the efforts of one individual, business or agency. Transformation and healing will be achieved in our community when, as a collective, we decide to combine our talents, skills, knowledge and wisdom in a focused and intentional way; subtracting ego, pride and the need for personal recognition from the equation," Victor and Dawn said.

The 2nd Annual Rally, complete with food, entertainment and community resources, aims to bring all those efforts and organizations together on Saturday, as the school year gets underway to restore a sense of hope, safety, and community across all of Milwaukee, and particularly in the Sherman Park neighborhood.

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