PROGRAM PROPOSAL TO RAINBOW BEACH PARK · CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT, SOUTH REGION

Full Spectrum at Rainbow Beach

One program, five parts: DJ classes, Rainbow Wednesdays, live stage shows, festivals and fall & holiday parties, right here on the South Side lakefront

A PROGRAM OF **Ras Tafari Inc.**	PARK **Rainbow Beach Park, 3111 E. 77th St.**
PROGRAM PARTS **(a) DJ classes · (b) Rainbow Wednesdays · (c) Live stage shows · (d) Festivals · (e) Fall & holiday parties**	RUNS **Year-round, starting 2027**
COST TO ATTEND **Free**	

Working draft, October 2026. Prepared by Ras Tafari Inc. for Rainbow Beach Park staff, after a first conversation with park staff. Dates, park spaces, artists and partners are proposed, not confirmed. Nothing here has been approved or funded yet.

1 Summary

Full Spectrum is a year-round music and culture program for Rainbow Beach Park, with five parts: **(a) DJ classes**, **(b) Rainbow Wednesdays**, a free weekly summer series, **(c) live stage shows** pairing DJs with local and major recording artists, **(d) festivals**, including SelassieFest and the heritage days of the Caribbean and African diaspora, and **(e) fall and holiday parties** from October through December. The kind of music programming people now travel downtown to Grant Park for comes to the South Side lakefront, free, built for every age and every background.

We are presenting all five parts together on purpose. **We ask that Full Spectrum be reviewed and approved once, as one program.** Then, when funding and dates line up for any part, scheduling it

is a conversation with park staff about dates and logistics, not a new proposal to add a new program.

5	12	$0	~9 mi
program parts, one approval	months a year of programming	to attend, for every part	closer than Grant Park

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2 Purpose: bring it home

Why this program, and why at Rainbow Beach?

Chicago's biggest free music happens downtown, at Grant Park and on the lakefront around it. For a family at 77th Street that is a trip of about nine miles each way: transit fares or parking for everyone, an hour or more of travel, and a late ride home with small children or elders. Many South Shore families make that trip once a summer, and many never do.

Rainbow Beach already has what those downtown stages have: the lake, open lawn, a summer crowd, and a neighborhood full of musicians. Full Spectrum puts the programming where the people already are.

- **No trip required.** Neighbors can walk, bike or take one bus to every part of the program.
- **Not just a show to watch.** Downtown, residents are the audience. Here, they are also the performers. The DJ classes feed Rainbow Wednesdays, Rainbow Wednesdays feeds the stage shows, and the stage shows feed the festivals.
- **The neighborhood's own music.** House, footwork, soul, gospel, reggae, Afrobeats and hip-hop all live in these blocks. The program is built from that music, not imported.
- **A reason to use the park all year.** Classes run when the beach is closed, so the park stays active through fall, winter and spring.

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3 Diversity of participants and audience

Who takes part, and who comes to watch?

The program is designed so that no single group owns it. Diversity is built into the format, not added at the end.

KIND OF DIVERSITY	HOW FULL SPECTRUM BUILDS IT IN
Age	Classes start with young children (with a grown-up) and run through teens, adults and elders. Every Rainbow Wednesday closes with Generations Back-to-Back, a youth DJ and a veteran trading songs.
Experience	First-timers at Open Decks, class graduates in the Youth Showcase, working local artists on the stage shows, and major recording artists as headliners. Everyone has a next step.
Musical culture	Every genre is a color: house, footwork, soul, gospel, reggae, Afrobeats, hip-hop, Latin and more rotate through the season. Music belongs to whoever loves it, so a young person can take on any sound from any part of the world.
Heritage	Grandparents bring the songs of their era; young DJs carry them forward in ways the elders have never heard. Each generation teaches the other.
Gender	DJing has long been mostly men, and most young people who come forward are boys. Classes hold seats for girls and women, lineups are built to be balanced, and girls get a focus of their own (see Empress Decks).
Geography	Priority goes to South Shore and neighboring community areas, and the open calls reach the whole South Side. Recruitment runs through schools, churches, libraries, park bulletin boards and other park councils, not only our own network.
Audience	Free, outdoors, family-friendly and on a weeknight as well as weekends, so the people already at the beach, and their neighbors, can simply walk up.

4 Inclusivity

How do we make sure everyone is welcome and able to take part?

Everyone is welcome at Full Spectrum, whatever their race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, income or immigration status. Saying that is the

easy part. These are the ways the program makes it true:

Cost is never the barrier

Every part is free to attend. Classes are free. A lending library of DJ controllers and headphones means students don't need their own gear. Young performers are paid stipends.

Physical access

An accessible viewing area on a firm surface, seating for elders and people with disabilities, and accessible classroom space. ASL interpretation at stage shows and festivals.

Sensory-friendly

Sound levels metered to park limits, free ear protection for children and performers, and a quieter zone at stage shows and festivals for anyone who needs a break.

Language

Flyers and open calls in English and Spanish, with other languages added as neighbors ask.

Family-friendly, every time

Clean-lyrics policy (radio edits only), no alcohol sold or served by the program, and guardian consent and an adult of their choosing on site for every performer under 18.

An open door, not a guest list

Open Decks sign-ups at the table that night, open calls with no experience required, and selection panels that include a neighborhood community member and a music educator, not just us.

Every Full Spectrum event follows Chicago Park District rules and its nondiscrimination policy.

5 A focus on girls: Empress Decks

Who is missing, and what will we do about it?

In our own experience with young DJs and musicians, most of the young people who come forward are boys. We will count it rather than assume it: every season report shows how many girls enrolled, performed and worked crew. Girls are just as interested and just as talented, but far fewer step up to the decks, and fewer still to the sound board. If we run an open program and simply wait, it will mostly serve boys.

So Full Spectrum makes girls a deliberate focus, called **Empress Decks**, after the Empress Empowerment Village that Ras Tafari Inc. runs for girls at SelassieFest. Its theme carries over: *see it, learn it, become it.* Girls are more likely to step up when they see other girls and women already doing it, when they can learn among other girls first, and when there is a clear next step.

PART	WHAT EMPRESS DECKS ADDS
(a) DJ classes	A girls-only Empress Decks track (about ages 9–17), taught by women DJs, alongside seats held for girls and women in every other track. A Live Sound track trains girls as sound and stage crew, where women are rarest of all.
(b) Rainbow Wednesdays	At least one girl or young woman DJ on every night's lineup, a woman among the featured DJs each month, and one **Empress Night** each season where girls and women hold every slot, the MC included.
(c) Live stage shows	A girl or young woman opens every stage show, and girls work on the crew.
(d) Festivals	Girl performers can compete for a set at the Empress Empowerment Village at SelassieFest, chosen by audience vote and counted by someone with no stake in the result.
(e) Fall & holiday parties	Empress Decks students DJ the Kids Kostume Party and the Christmas Party for their own families.

PART	WHAT EMPRESS DECKS ADDS
Recruiting	Open calls go directly to girls' groups, girls' sports teams, church youth groups and school music programs, and say plainly that girls are wanted. Parents can sit in on a first class.
Measured	Every season report counts how many girls enrolled, finished a class, performed and worked crew, so the park can see whether the gap is closing.

The park welcomes it. Rainbow Beach Park staff have told us the girls' focus is welcome: girls' participation has long trailed boys' across the Park District. We will put Empress Decks in writing in the park agreement, and girls are always welcome in every other class too.

The examples we point to already show it can be done: DJ RINOKA and DJ Michelle are both girls who started young.

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6 The five parts

What exactly are we proposing?

a DJ classes

Year-round · indoors in the off-season, outdoors in summer

Free, hands-on classes where neighbors learn to DJ: beatmatching and blending, building a set, live looping and editing, playing with live musicians, and the wordplay and mashups of the Theme Clash. The program runs **every Tuesday, year-round**: children join any Tuesday and work through **14 Missions** at their own pace. One core curriculum is taught to every age group and adapted by age and by challenge level (Mild, Medium or Spicy). It's taught by experienced Chicago DJs, using program-owned gear so no one needs their own.

AGE GROUP	WHO IT'S FOR
Little DJs	Ages 5–7, with a parent or grandparent learning alongside
Junior DJs	Ages 8–11
Teen DJs	Ages 12–17; the main pipeline into Rainbow Wednesdays
Grown-Up & Elder DJs	18 and up, including the parents and grandparents who grew up on house and the South Side sound systems
Empress Decks	Girls, about 9–17, taught by women DJs (welcomed by park staff; see section 5)

Live instruments: young drummers, steel pan, horn, keys and string players join through Mission 12 (Mic, MC and Live Lab) and the Live Lab segment at Rainbow Wednesdays, not as a separate class.

The full curriculum already runs in the **Rainbow DJ Lab**, our live classroom app: fourteen Missions in a 90-minute class core, one shared class clock on kid, coach and parent screens, rotating station jobs, Passport stamps, and an emailed recap to families after every class. Open the DJ Lab · Register a child

From the park: a room at the park in the off-season, as available, and a regular time slot. **Graduation:** every class ends with a set at Rainbow Wednesdays Open Decks or a park event.

b Rainbow Wednesdays

Summer · 14 Wednesday evenings, June 2 – Sept. 1, 2027 · fully planned

A free weekly youth DJ and live-instrument series on the beach. Each Wednesday is one color of the rainbow and one sound; the season goes around the spectrum twice and ends in full spectrum. Every night includes Open Decks, a Youth Showcase, the Live Lab, the Theme Clash (a theme everyone knows blended with a well-known song), and Generations Back-to-Back.

This part is already written out in full, with a nightly schedule, season calendar, production plan, safety rules and a $34,220 budget.

Series overview · Full Rainbow Wednesdays proposal · Examples of the format online

c Live stage shows

Summer · selected evenings, dates set with park staff

Concert nights on a stage, where DJs perform alongside live musicians, local recording artists and a major recording artist as headliner. The stage shows are the top of the ladder: each lineup opens with young performers who came up through the classes and Rainbow Wednesdays, so a teenager who learned to blend in February can open for a national act in August.

- **Format:** youth openers, then local artists with a live band and DJ, then the headliner.
- **Artists:** no artists are booked yet. Headliners are booked only once a show is funded and its date is set with the park.
- **Production:** stage, professional sound and lighting, security and crew supplied by the producing partner, under whatever permit the park requires for the show's size.

Festivals

Selected full days · including SelassieFest

Full-day, all-ages festivals of music, food, culture, vendors and family activities. Ras Tafari Inc. already produces one: **SelassieFest**, Chicago's roots reggae and cultural festival, with its 2027 edition planned for Saturday, July 24. **The 2027 venue is not yet confirmed, and Rainbow Beach Park is under consideration.** SelassieFest connects to the rest of the program: Rainbow Wednesdays on July 21 is the SelassieFest Warm-Up, and the strongest young performers of the season are offered a set at the festival.

At Rainbow Beach, the festival part includes:

- **A Full Spectrum end-of-summer festival**, growing out of the Rainbow Wednesdays Finale: every class, every young performer and a headliner on one day.
- **Heritage festival days** that celebrate the Caribbean and African diaspora of the South Side, planned with the communities that already celebrate them (see the table below).
- **SelassieFest at Rainbow Beach.** Either SelassieFest 2027 itself, if Rainbow Beach becomes its venue, or a SelassieFest community day at Rainbow Beach, bringing the festival's music and culture to the South Shore lakefront.

HERITAGE DAY	WHEN	WHY IT BELONGS HERE
Black History Month	February	A month-long series, not a single day: *Remix the Record*, below. Its roots are in Chicago, where Carter G. Woodson’s Association for the Study of Negro Life and History was founded in 1915.
Juneteenth	June 19	Freedom Day, during Caribbean-American Heritage Month.
International Reggae Day	July 1	The worldwide day for reggae, founded in Jamaica; a natural fit for a roots reggae producer.

HERITAGE DAY	WHEN	WHY IT BELONGS HERE
Belize Day	First Sunday in August	Chicago's Belizean community held its first Belizean Day in Washington Park in 1980, and in 1998 Mayor Richard M. Daley declared the first Sunday in August for the celebration. It has been run by the Belize Day in the Park Committee and was not held in 2025. We would invite the committee to partner, or to consider Rainbow Beach as a home.
Jamaica Independence (Jamaica 65)	August 6, 2027	Jamaica's 65th year of independence.
Marcus Garvey Festival	Around August 17	Marcus Garvey's birthday, honoring the Jamaican-born leader whose movement shaped Black Chicago.
Trinidad & Tobago Independence	August 31	Soca, calypso and steel pan.

Each festival day is permitted on its own, with its own site plan, insurance and the special event permit the park requires. Heritage days led by another community's organization are planned with that organization, not in its place.

Black History Month: ***Remix the Record***

Four Saturdays in February, indoors at the park, for every age. Neighbors learn to **research real history with AI**, pick one specific story, **write two songs about it**, and then hear the DJs mix every team's songs into **one continuous set that walks through Black history in order**. The research sessions are led by **Albert Harris**, a Ras Tafari Inc. director.

The heart of it is a research habit, not a gadget. AI is a fast research assistant, and it is also sometimes confidently wrong. So the first rule of the series is the **two-source rule**: every fact that goes into a song is checked against two real sources (a book, a newspaper, an archive, a museum) before it is sung. Participants leave knowing how to find a primary source, how to tell when an AI has made something up, and how to cite what they found.

SESSION	WHEN	WHAT HAPPENS
1. Find your story	Saturday, Feb. 6, 1–3 pm	How to use AI as a research partner. Teams start broad (“civil rights,” “music”) and narrow to one person, place and moment, then list what they need to prove. Each team takes one era, so together the songs cover the whole journey.
2. Check it, then write it	Saturday, Feb. 13, 1–3 pm	The two-source rule in practice: library databases, newspaper archives and primary documents. Then two songs per topic, written with AI as a writing partner and finished in the team’s own words. **Song 1, “The Story,”** tells what happened, and every line traces to a source. **Song 2, “The Echo,”** answers it from today: what it means now, or a letter to the people who lived it.
3. Make the tracks	Saturday, Feb. 20, 1–3 pm	Songs become tracks: sung or rapped over beats made in the DJ classes, played live, or produced with an AI music tool on a plan whose terms allow public performance. DJ class students put every song in time order and plan the transitions.
4. The Journey Set	Saturday, Feb. 27, 5–8 pm	The finale. The DJs mix every team’s songs into one continuous set that travels through history in order. Between songs, a short “source card” on screen names the fact and where it was found. Families and elders are invited to add their own memories at the open mic.

A journey in seven colors. Like Rainbow Wednesdays, the set moves through the spectrum, one era to each color. Teams choose their own topics; these examples show how specific a good topic is:

COLOR	EXAMPLE TOPIC
■ Red	Jean Baptiste Point DuSable and the 1780s trading post that became Chicago

COLOR	EXAMPLE TOPIC
Orange	Ida B. Wells and the anti-lynching journalism she carried on from Chicago
Yellow	1915: the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History is founded in Chicago, and the road to Black History Month begins
Green	The *Chicago Defender* and the Great Migration north
Blue	Thomas A. Dorsey and the birth of gospel music on the South Side
Indigo	The 1960 Rainbow Beach wade-ins, when the NAACP Youth Council, led by Velma Murphy, waded in here and Murphy was hit in the head by a thrown brick
Violet	Frankie Knuckles, the Warehouse and the birth of house music

- **All ages, safely.** Most AI tools require users to be at least 13, so younger children work in a family team with their grown-up at the keyboard, or follow along on the room screen. Nobody types personal information into an AI tool.
- **Real sources, nearby.** Teams are pointed to the Chicago Public Library's Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature at Woodson Regional Library, 9525 S. Halsted, and to free online newspaper and Library of Congress archives.
- **Something to keep.** Each team gets its lyrics with their sources as a printed songbook, and, with consent, a recording of the Journey Set.
- The usual Full Spectrum standards apply: free, clean lyrics, ASL interpretation at the finale, and a CPD background check for every adult who works with young people.

e Fall & holiday parties

October – February · indoors at the park, as available

When the beach closes, the program comes inside. A season of free family parties keeps neighbors coming to the park through the fall, the holidays and into February, and gives the DJ class students a home crowd to play for. Each one is built on a Rainbow Beach, Ras Tafari Inc., Chicago or South Side tradition.

PARTY	WHEN	WHAT HAPPENS
Kids Kostume Party	Late October	Costume parade, a Little DJs set, a spooky Theme Clash, games and a safe trick-or-treat for young children.
Icons Party	Early November	A night for the legends: Prince, Michael Jackson and Bob Marley, alongside Chicago’s own icons, among them Curtis Mayfield, Donny Hathaway, Minnie Riperton, Lou Rawls, Chaka Khan, Earth, Wind & Fire and Frankie Knuckles. Young DJs remix the classics, and the crowd comes dressed as their favorite icon.
Thanks & Giving Party	Week before Thanksgiving	A community potluck and food drive that honors the neighborhood's elders, with a Generations Back-to-Back set.
Holiday Steppers’ Set	Early December	Chicago steppin', a South Side tradition, with a free beginners' lesson first, for grown-ups and elders.
Christmas Party & Grand Market	Mid-December	A toy giveaway and a holiday visit for the children, plus a small market of local vendors in the spirit of Jamaica's Christmas Grand Market. The soundtrack starts with “This Christmas” by Chicago’s own Donny Hathaway.

PARTY	WHEN	WHAT HAPPENS
Kwanzaa Kuumba Night	Between December 26 and 31	A Kwanzaa celebration built around kuumba (creativity): drumming, spoken word and young performers.
Noon Year's Eve	December 31, midday	A family countdown to noon, with kid DJs, so the youngest can ring in the new year too.
Lovers Rock Valentine's Party	Saturday before Valentine's Day (Feb. 13, 2027)	Lovers rock, the romantic side of reggae, plus Chicago soul love songs, for couples, families and elders. Children make valentines for the neighborhood's seniors, and young DJs play a Generations Back-to-Back of love songs from every decade.

Each party is scheduled with park staff and uses park space only as available. All are free, alcohol-free and family-friendly.

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7 How the five parts fit together

Why five parts in one program?

The first four parts are a ladder. A neighbor can start as a spectator and, step by step, end up on a festival stage, all without leaving the park. The fall and holiday parties keep the ladder going in the off-season: class students play for their own families while the beach is closed. Empress Decks runs up every rung, so girls climb the whole ladder too.

1

Learn

DJ classes. Free, with gear provided, for every age.

Empress Decks: a girls-only track taught by women DJs

2

Play

Rainbow Wednesdays. Open Decks, then a paid Showcase set in front of a real crowd.

Empress Decks: a girl on every lineup, plus Empress Night

3

Open

Live stage shows. The best young performers open for local and major artists.

Empress Decks: a girl opens every show

4

Headline

Festivals. A set at the end-of-summer festival or at SelassieFest, won by audience vote.

Empress Decks: sets at the Empress Empowerment Village, by audience vote

A year at Rainbow Beach (illustrative)

WHEN	WHAT'S HAPPENING
January – May	DJ class cohorts indoors; spring open call for young performers; Rainbow Wednesdays workshops in April and May
February	Black History Month: *Remix the Record*, four Saturdays of history research with AI and songwriting, ending in the Journey Set (Feb. 27); Lovers Rock Valentine's Party (Feb. 13)
June – September	Rainbow Wednesdays every week; live stage shows on selected evenings; festival days, including Juneteenth, International Reggae Day, Belize Day, Jamaica 65, the Marcus Garvey Festival, Trinidad & Tobago Independence and the end-of-summer festival
July	SelassieFest (July 24, 2027; venue to be confirmed, with Rainbow Beach under consideration), with the July 21 Rainbow Wednesday as its warm-up
October – December	Fall DJ class cohorts; fall and holiday parties: Kids Kostume Party, Icons Party, Thanks & Giving, Holiday Steppers' Set, Christmas Party & Grand Market, Kwanzaa Kuumba Night and Noon Year's Eve; season report to the park

The five parts don't all have to start at once. Each one starts when it is funded and scheduled. The ladder works from whichever step comes first.

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8 Approve once, schedule as ready

What are we asking the park to approve?

We are asking that the park and its leadership review all five parts now and recognize **Full Spectrum as one program** at Rainbow Beach Park. Once that happens, adding a class cohort, a stage show, a festival day or a holiday party is a scheduling conversation, not a new proposal and a new approval each time.

Decided once, now

- That all five parts belong at Rainbow Beach Park
- Their purpose, audience and the standards in this document
- The producing partner and how the program is led
- The general park spaces each part would use

Confirmed each time, with park staff

- Specific dates and times
- Site plan for that event
- Certificate of insurance naming the Chicago Park District
- Any special event or amplified-sound permit the event's size requires

9 Standards for every event

What can the park count on, every time?

- $1,000,000 general liability insurance naming the Chicago Park District as additional insured.
- Background checks for every adult who works with young people; guardian consent for every performer under 18.
- Clean-lyrics policy for every set, MC and artist. No alcohol sold or served by the program.
- Public performance licensing for recorded music (ASCAP, BMI, SESAC and GMR, or confirmation that the park's licenses cover it) is in place before any public performance.
- Sound metered to park limits; generators and equipment supplied by the producing partner unless the park offers otherwise.
- Load-in and load-out on the agreed schedule, nothing left overnight unless agreed, and the site left cleaner than we found it.

- A short report to the park after each season: attendance, performers, where the audience came from, and what to change.

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10 Funding

How will it be paid for?

Each part is funded on its own, and none starts until its funding is in place. That way, approving the program does not commit the park to any cost.

PART	PLANNED SOURCES	STATUS
(a) DJ classes	Arts and youth grants, sponsors, Ras Tafari Inc.	One-page class budget (instructors, gear, ear protection, screening, insurance) published before any class starts
(b) Rainbow Wednesdays	Arts grants, including the Illinois Arts Council; local sponsors; Ras Tafari Inc. cash and in-kind. $34,220 total.	Draft budget complete
(c) Live stage shows	Sponsors, arts grants, partner funding	To be budgeted per show
(d) Festivals	Sponsors, vendor fees, grants, Ras Tafari Inc.	To be budgeted per festival
(e) Fall & holiday parties	Sponsors, donated food and toys, small grants, Ras Tafari Inc.	To be budgeted per party

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11 Who we are

Ras Tafari Inc. (Ras Tafari Inc. Consultants)

Disclosure. “Ras Tafari Inc. Consultants” is the name Ras Tafari Inc. uses for its proposal work; it is not a separate company. Full Spectrum is a Ras Tafari Inc. program: Ras Tafari Inc. wrote this proposal and would

produce the program. No Ras Tafari Inc. officer, director or staff member is paid for work on the DJ Lab today; any paid role needs approval by directors with no stake in it. Ras Tafari Inc. also produces SelassieFest, so young performers reach SelassieFest only by audience vote, counted by someone with no stake in the result, and no class records are shared with the festival. Conflict-of-interest policy

A Chicago 501(c)(3) cultural and educational nonprofit dedicated to Caribbean and African Diaspora heritage, and the producer of **SelassieFest**. It produces events end to end, including artist contracting, staging, sound, permits, insurance and marketing, with its own production crew; for the DJ classes, sound, stage and lighting come from Q-Ality Sound under a written vendor agreement.

Music is the way in. Mentoring is what stays. Every Full Spectrum program pairs the craft with mentoring. Our mentoring is led by **Paul Kelly, MA, MHS, LPC**, a licensed professional counselor and the founder of Self-Improvement Philosophy (S.I.P.), a mentoring curriculum written for young people ages 15 to 20. Young DJs learn that a crashed mix is information, not failure, and S.I.P. carries the same lesson off the decks: look honestly at how you think, and you can change what you decide.

Address	7700 S. Stony Island Ave., Chicago, IL 60649
Project lead	Stephen Henry, President
Mentoring lead	Paul Kelly, MA, MHS, LPC, Vice President
Contact	872-255-9333 · stephen@selassiefest.com

Next steps

Review with park leadership and a walk-through of the park spaces. We'll bring whatever the park needs to decide.

872-255-9333 **stephen@selassiefest.com**