

February 22, 2022



Dear Partner,

Thank you and your company for your work in our communities! We are writing to ask for your partnership and support for our 2022 West Bank Athletic Club (WBAC) Summer Festival.

An exciting new collaboration will allow us to expand the annual WBAC soccer tournament to include an international artist-in-residence and a variety of culturally-specific arts activities. Our artist-in-residence, Sharma Boy, is traveling from Djibouti for his first ever appearance in North America. Sharma is a superstar in the Somali community, in particular among Somali youth, and has 120 million views across his YouTube videos. WBAC, a Somali youth and young adult soccer organization founded in 2008, is partnering with GMCC, a 116-year old interfaith and multicultural nonprofit organization, to launch the Summer Festival in June, 2022.

The annual WBAC Summer Festival, now in its 12th year, brings hundreds of young players and thousands of audience members from around the country to the Twin Cities for a week-long soccer tournament. This tournament has long been a venue for celebration and community gathering for thousands of Somalis. The 2019 Festival hosted 16 teams representing 10 different states: 400 young players ages 16-24 participated in a total of 31 games. Our 2022 tournament will take place the week of June 19th; the live music performance will take place at Ted Mann concert hall on June 25th. We are excited to resume this important community event after scaling it back significantly for two years due to COVID-19.

Support from sponsors and donors like you has allowed us to host this tournament for the past 11 years by covering expenses for field rental, referee fees, security, outreach, and advertising. The 2019 Festival was supported by 40 small Somali-run businesses who gave anywhere from \$250-\$1,000 each, demonstrating wide community support. We also secured sponsorships from Minnesota Twins, Minnesota Vikings, Minnesota United Football Club, Metro Transit, and Remax. Your support will allow us to host the largest and most exciting WBAC Summer Festival to date!

Being part of the 2022 WBAC Summer Festival offers a unique opportunity to authentically engage with Somali communities from across the country. **As we increasingly struggle with challenges of racial inequity, our Summer Festival provides an opportunity for communities to join together, celebrate, share our cultures, and better understand each other.** We hope you will join us!

We have enclosed some additional information about the history of the Festival and our plans for 2022. Thank you for your support and consideration.

Sincerely,

Coach Ahmed, Executive Director
West Bank Athletic Club
coachahmed08@gmail.com | 612-702-7677

Adrienne Dorn, Executive Director
GMCC (founded as Greater Minneapolis
Council of Churches)
adorn@gmcc.org | 612-702-7677

SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

Becoming a WBAC Summer Festival Sponsor is an exciting opportunity to be part of one of the largest Somali community events in all of North America; reach a diverse, family-friendly, all-ages audience of thousands; and connect with leaders from the Somali community throughout Minnesota and the U.S. Benefits are customizable to your needs at every level. No matter the financial commitment, sponsors will be featured on the WBAC Summer Festival webpage, posters, flyers, e-newsletters, and across social media platforms.



\$10,000+

- Premier placement of sponsor logo at Festival events (programs, banners, signage, digital screen) and on all marketing materials (website, posters, flyers, advertisements, e-newsletters, digital press, social media)
- Acknowledgement as a primary sponsor in announcements at the beginning of each Festival activity and live reads throughout Festival activities
- Featured content about your company on our website and across social media platforms
- Company opportunity to speak at tournament finale, trophy presentation, and finale concert
- Ten tickets to all events (music performances)
- Meet and greet with the featured artist-in-residence
- Opportunity for tabling
- Specific asset package customized to your needs

\$5,000 - \$9,999

- Sponsor logo at Festival events (programs, banners, signage, digital screen) and on all marketing materials (website, posters, flyers, advertisements, e-newsletters, digital press, social media)
- Acknowledgement as a sponsor in announcements at the beginning of each Festival activity and live reads throughout Festival activities
- Featured content about your company on our website and across social media platforms
- Five tickets to all events (music performances)
- Opportunity for tabling

\$500 - \$4,999

- Sponsor logo on all marketing materials (website, posters, flyers, advertisements, social media, e-newsletters, digital press)
- Opportunity for tabling



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

West Bank Athletic Club

West Bank Athletic Club (WBAC) is a youth development organization founded in 2008 by Ahmed Ismail, known in our community as “Coach Ahmed” or simply “Coach.” Throughout its history, WBAC has served young people ages 5-24 from the Cedar Riverside (or West Bank) neighborhood and across the Twin Cities with year-round programming that supports 21st-century skills including leadership development, teamwork, discipline, responsibility, and respect for others, primarily through soccer. WBAC has included as many as five teams in any given year and hosted an average of six annual tournaments, serving over 1,500 young players annually. WBAC has long provided a platform for young Somalis to find community and build relationships. During his time as Executive Director of WBAC, Coach has managed nearly 100 tournaments, including several outside of the metro area due to interest and demand from outstate partners, demonstrating broad reach and impact.

GMCC

GMCC, founded as Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches, is an interfaith and multicultural nonprofit organization with a mission “uniting people of faith, serving people in need.” Over our 116-year history, GMCC has worked in partnership with a variety of communities and in many issue areas. We have collaborated with communities and faith leaders to address inequities and increase quality of life through initiatives and services including mentoring and youth development; support for seniors; hunger relief; advocacy and education around equity and poverty; and volunteerism and service learning. We know that good work is already happening in our communities, spearheaded by brilliant community leaders who have the strongest connections to community members. As such, our role is often not to build initiatives from scratch but to partner with leaders and community members to add capacity to good work already happening. We use our infrastructure, staffing, and networks to develop masterful collaborations that respond to needs and opportunities, make positive change, and result in healthy, equitable communities.

WBAC Summer Festival

The WBAC Summer Festival was launched in 2009 with 12 teams of boys and young men ages 16-24: Six from Minnesota and six from other parts of the U.S., including Atlanta, GA; Columbus, OH; Seattle, WA; and Salt Lake City, UT. The Festival always takes place at the end of June to coincide with Somali Independence Day on July 1st. The first Festival attracted approximately 3,000 spectators. Over the past decade, the Festival's popularity has increased significantly as measured by the number of teams applying to participate, audience members, impressions across social media platforms, and press coverage. What's more, two Festival alums have been recruited by MLS (Major League Soccer) teams: One player from Ohio now plays with New York City FC and another from Vermont now plays with San Jose Earthquakes.



The 2019 Festival had 16 teams from all over the country representing 10 different states: 400 young players ages 16-24 participated in 31 total games. In 2019, we also piloted the expansion of the Festival to include the arts: We hosted Somali artists from Minnesota, London, and Toronto including UK-based rapper, spoken word artist, social entrepreneur, and motivational speaker Jamala Osman; Toronto-based spoken word artist and singer Hanad Bandz; and local artist DJ Fowzi. The artists performed Somali songs and spoken word at half time and in between games on a stage at the park adjacent to the tournament stadium. The arts activities successfully increased participation in the Festival and allowed non-Somalis to experience and better understand Somali culture.



GMCC presents WBAC Summer Festival

Coach has always been the primary volunteer planning, fundraising for, and managing the WBAC Summer Festival. However, the growth of the event has outpaced Coach's capacity to support it. Understanding its importance in our community, GMCC will provide infrastructure and capacity to not only continue but expand the event: This masterful collaboration will expand the soccer tournament into a comprehensive cultural heritage festival that includes Somali arts and cultural activities featuring an international Somali artist-in-residence. This community event will provide opportunities for communities to join together, celebrate, and share cultural heritage.

Almost all living Somali artists sing to backing tracks in lieu of live instruments. This is due in part to the destructive impact of civil war and the related destruction of instruments and recordings, censorship of Somali artists, and dissolution of music education. As part of the residency, we will build a band for our artist-in-residence, Sharma Boy, so he will perform songs with live instrumentation. As such, the residency will give audiences an unprecedented chance to experience live Somali music. Sharma Boy is a Somali rapper, singer, songwriter, and dancer. His musical practice infuses the longstanding Somali tradition of "gabay," described as a Somali-specific oral poetry tradition, with contemporary Hip Hop and Rap that resonates with Somali youth. His musical style, along with his lyrical messages of peace, love, and unity, have gained him recognition by Somali audiences worldwide. He has a huge following, including over 120 million views across his YouTube videos. The live music performance will take place at Ted Mann concert hall on June 25th. The artist will also conduct a workshop series for Somali youth, and youth activity leaders will plan and lead cultural activities.



WBAC Summer Festival has significant reach as measured by both audience and exposure through press outlets and social media platforms. Television stations Somali TV Minnesota (viewership of about 50,000); Somali Television Network (viewership of about 50,000); and Universal Somali TV (viewership of about 300,000) cover and report on the Festival. Voice of America covers daily Festival activities, disseminating content through both television and radio with a total reach of 200,000. All these media outlets post their content to YouTube and social media platforms in addition to broadcasting on their stations. KALY Somali American Radio advertises and covers the Festival to a listenership of about 80,000. MN United FC, Minnesota's professional soccer team, has also provided in-kind e-newsletter ads, in-stadium announcements, and social media posts targeting their constituents. The Snapchat profile Somali Aduunka "snaps" the Festival to their 200,000 followers. WBAC also posts content across our own media platforms including Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram. To date, we have focused social media efforts on Snapchat, where we have 12,000 followers.

After isolation and lack of community gathering due to COVID-19, our communities are seeking venues for celebration and community connection. The WBAC Summer Festival will build community and facilitate intergenerational connections by engaging youth, families, and elders. We hope you will support this important celebration of Somali culture and community bonding!



SPONSOR APPLICATION



2022 GMCC PRESENTS WBAC SUMMER FESTIVAL

Please complete the following:

- Sponsor Application Form
 - fill out online at <https://gmcc.org/wbac-sponsor/>
 - fill out by hand and email to adorn@gmcc.org
 - fill out by hand and mail to address below
 - fill out by hand and deliver in person to Coach Ahmed
- Email high resolution logo (300 dpi) (jpeg, png) to adorn@gmcc.org
- Sponsor payment made in one of the following ways:
 - pay online at <https://gmcc.org/wbac-sponsor/>
 - mail a check to GMCC with memo: WBAC Sponsorship
 - mailing address: 1100 E Lake Street, Minneapolis, MN 55407
 - hand a check to Coach Ahmed

Please complete application and submit payment by May 1st, 2022.

Business Name: _____

Contact Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Contact Phone (1): _____ (2): _____

Email: _____

Sponsorship Levels (circle one):

Lead Presenting (\$25,000) Presenting (\$10,000) Premium (\$5,000) Festival (\$1,000)

Please describe any special requests you would like GMCC and WBAC to consider:

AGREEMENT:

I agree to indemnify and hold harmless West Bank Athletic Club, their affiliates, all volunteer members, contracted staff, event sponsors, all their officers, agents, and their employees for damage, injury or loss to any person or property related to my participation in GMCC/West Bank Athletic Club Summer Festival. I have read, understood and agreed to the conditions stated in this agreement and have provided truthful and complete information:

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____