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### Next Steps for Love's Include Youth Programs

**UPDATE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Omaha, Nebraska – Wednesday, March 10, 2021** - The North 24<sup>th</sup> Street Business Improvement District (BID) and Association have chosen jazz musician, Dana Murray to provide music programming and education to the North Omaha community at the former Love's Jazz building at 24<sup>th</sup> and Lake Street (see next steps below).

Dana Murray, a native of South Omaha, studied music performance at Berklee College of Music in Boston. As a professional percussionist, Mr. Murray has shared the stage with musicians who span the musical spectrum including Omaha's own Preston Love, Wynton Marsalis, Norah Jones and Aloe Blacc.

In 2005, Dana returned to Omaha to raise his son and to teach as a music instructor at Omaha Burke, Bellevue East and at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Dana recorded and released his debut album *Negro Manifesto* in 2018. He currently produces music from his home where his professional studio is housed.

"It is an honor and privilege to be given such an opportunity. Youth development through music has been my greatest passion in life. The once vibrant, beacon for music, art and culture can shine once again on North 24<sup>th</sup> Street. This will not belong to me...This belongs to the community. Let's get it!" says, Dana Murray.

While the goal is to reopen the former Love's Jazz building and provide music education and performances for the community, there are still several steps involved prior to reopening. The North 24<sup>th</sup> Street Business Improvement District will serve as the master lessee of the three bays and is currently defining the terms of the lease with the City of Omaha.

"Now that we have determined who will run programming, our next step is remodeling the space. Our timeline for reopening will consider renovations and how the coronavirus plays out." says LaVonya Goodwin, Board President of the BID. "We also want the community to know that this space is under new organizational management and is not in collaboration with the former Love's Jazz board." says Goodwin. The City of Omaha terminated its lease agreement with the Love's Jazz and Arts Center board of directors in October 2020 after a series of lease violations.

The BID plans to ensure that the music history of North 24<sup>th</sup> Street and Preston Love's role in that history remains a part of the programming. There has been no decision regarding a name change on the building, and the BID plans to support Dana Murray's programming from an advisory role with the goal of the program running as its own nonprofit in the near future.

Pastor Ralph Lassiter, BID Board Member and President of the BID Association stated, "Our decision was not easy; however, I am confident that we are moving closer to our vision of North 24<sup>th</sup> Street becoming a premier destination that is family-friendly, rich in history, culture, heritage and a base for economic development. I encourage the community to support Mr. Murray as he strives to have a positive impact on our young people and the community overall."

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### What to Expect

- Dana Murray's vision is to empower the community through music and art. The proposed Music and Arts Academy will provide a progressive music education and life skills to youth. Initially,

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small group classes will be offered with the goal of creating instrumental ensembles. Programming is in the planning and development stages.

### **The BID's Selection Process**

- In October 2020, Mayor Jean Stothert tasked the North 24<sup>th</sup> Street Business Improvement District and Association to “provide the opportunity for Love’s Jazz to once again celebrate music, education and the history of North Omaha.”
- There was never an agreement or promise for Preston Love, Jr. to provide programming.
- Mr. Love is a board member of the BID Association.
- The board of directors evaluated each proposal’s plan to:
  - Provide youth music education and live music performances
  - Support the BID’s mission and vision
  - Support the Village Plan and the Forever North Plan
  - Support the area’s designation as a 24<sup>th</sup> and Lake Cultural Arts District
- Mr. Love and Mr. Murray both submitted proposals for programming.
  - Each candidate had two personal interviews with the board.
  - The candidates also provided written answers to the board’s questions.
- During the interview, Mr. Love was asked if he would accept the outcome of the board’s decision. He affirmed that he would.
- The board of directors also suggested that Mr. Love and Mr. Murray talk about potential collaboration. The two spoke, and agreed that future collaboration was an option, but that the board would vote for one program.
- The board of directors voted by majority for Mr. Murray’s proposal to provide youth music education to the community.
- The City of Omaha owns the properties at 2506 and 2510 North 24<sup>th</sup> Street (the former Love’s Jazz space).

### **Next Steps**

- The City of Omaha Planning Department will host a public hearing for the former Love’s Jazz Buildings.
- Date TBD.
- The BID will work with the City on renovations.

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The North 24<sup>th</sup> Street Business Improvement District is a quasi-governmental entity made up of 240 North 24<sup>th</sup> Street property owners and is partnered with the City of Omaha and established by state statute. The BID’s board of directors are all property owners and business owners within the district.

On June 2, 2020, the Omaha City Council approved the ordinance for North 24<sup>th</sup> Street Business Improvement District (BID) by a vote of 6 to 0. The North 24<sup>th</sup> Street Business Improvement District is established “for the purpose of providing specified activities, work and improvements in the North 24<sup>th</sup> Street area (Meredith Avenue

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to the north, 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the west, Cuming Street to the south, and 23<sup>rd</sup> Street to 20<sup>th</sup> Street to the east) of Omaha, Nebraska.” For more information go to [www.north24thstreetbid.com](http://www.north24thstreetbid.com).