

Earth, Wind & Fire drummer, ex-Chicago members to play at Bonita Springs fest

Charles Runnells

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They're best known for playing with rock and R&B legends Chicago and Earth, Wind & Fire. Now Bill Champlin, John Paris and more musicians are lending their star power to a fundraising music festival in Bonita Springs.

November's Kickin' the Blues Music Festival will benefit the Bonita-based nonprofit Grounding Wire and its mission to help people struggling with anxiety and mental health disorders. Organizers hope to host more concerts across the state.

"Mental health issues are impacting the majority of Americans with 70 percent reporting that they have debilitating stress," says co-founder Frances Borshell in an Aug. 4 news release announcing the concert. "Suicide is increasing at an alarming rate along with gun violence. There aren't enough resources to help those in need, especially in Southwest Florida."

The outdoor show features current Earth, Wind & Fire drummer Paris (who joined the band in 2001) and former Chicago members Champlin, Keith Howland and Jeff Coffey.

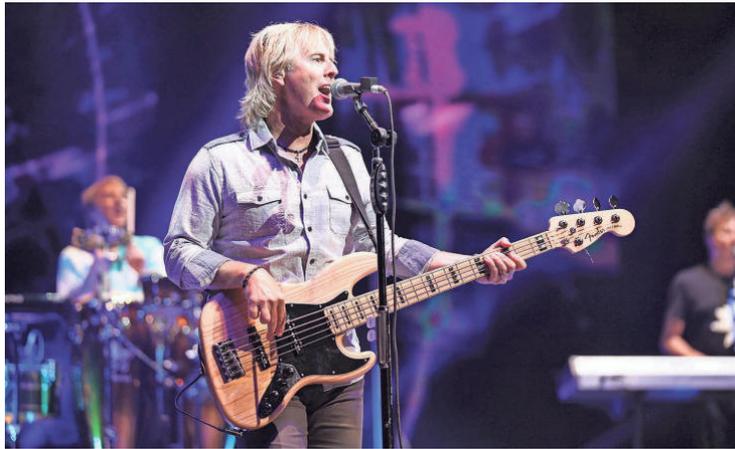
The Grammy Award-winning Champlin is perhaps the best-known musician in the Bonita Springs lineup. The singer, songwriter and keyboardist sang lead on several of Chicago's biggest hits in the 1980s, including "Hard Habit to Break," "Look Away" and "I Don't Wanna Live Without Your Love." He also co-wrote the Earth, Wind & Fire hit "After the Love Has Gone."

Howland was Chicago's longest-running lead guitarist (1995-2021) and Coffey was the band's lead singer and bassist from 2016-2018. He's also the bassist and background singer for former Eagles guitarist Don Felder.

The musicians will perform songs that made their groups famous in the 1970s and 1980s, including Chicago's "25 or 6 to 4" and "Hard Habit to Break" and Earth, Wind & Fire's "Boogie Wonderland" and "Fantasy," according to the news release. Other guest musicians



Drummer John Paris joined Earth, Wind & Fire in 2001. PHOTOS PROVIDED



Jeff Coffey was lead singer and bassist for Chicago from 2016-2018.

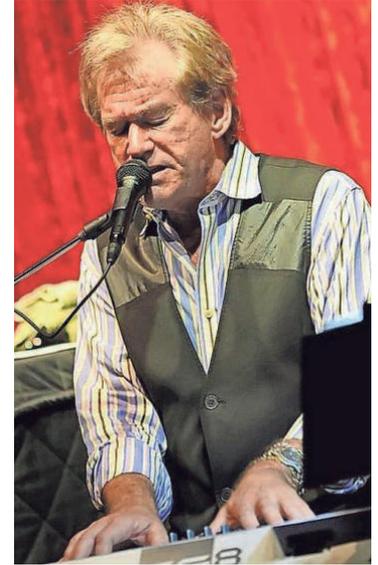
will perform as well.

When is Kickin' the Blues Music Festival?

The festival is 4-9 p.m. Saturday,

Nov. 19, at Riverside Park, 10450 Reynolds St., Bonita Springs. Tickets are \$25 for general admission, \$65 for VIP.

The event will also include food trucks, beer and wine, a meditation station and mental health providers with



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information on mental health resources.

Money raised at the concert will be used to give mental-health toolkits to schools and individuals in need, according to the release. The kits will include guidance for active breathing and meditation; as well as access to videos, interactive content, educational information and more.

The nonprofit Grounding Wire was founded by husband and wife Frances and Bret Borshell of Bonita Springs.

For tickets and more information, call 250-1805 or visit groundingwire.org.

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