

“Kickin’ the Blues Music Festival” to benefit Ian recovery, mental health

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

The “Kickin’ the Blues Music Festival” planned from 4 to 9 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 19 in Bonita Springs will benefit Ian recovery efforts and mental health and suicide prevention. The event will be held at Riverside Park, 10450 Reynolds Street, in Bonita Springs.

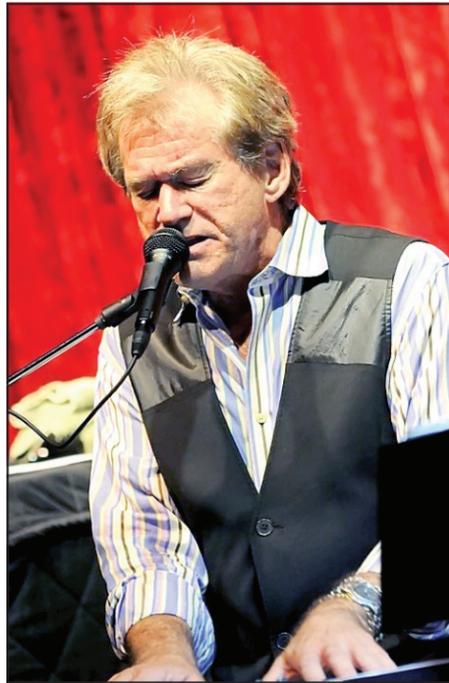
Musicians formerly of the rock band Chicago and currently of Earth Wind & Fire will headline the music festival in Bonita Springs along with local bands that organizers are recruiting. The organizers, Grounding Wire.org, a Southwest Florida-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit, plan to take the festival statewide (and beyond) to benefit mental health and suicide prevention.

“There is so much devastation from Hurricane Ian in our area. People are struggling with loss of their homes, jobs and even loved ones. There has never been a more critical need for mental health care and financial aid to those in our community,” said Frances Borshell of Grounding Wire.

Headlining the music festival will be Bill Champlin, Keith Howland and Jeff Coffey, formerly of the hit band Chicago, and John Paris, current member of Earth, Wind & Fire. They will be performing the music that made the groups famous in the 1970s and 1980s with hits such as 25 or 6 to 4, Beginnings, Saturday in the Park, Searchin’, Hard Habit to Break, Boogie Wonderland and Fantasy.

Music will be continuous throughout the event with other guest performers slated to appear as well.

The inaugural event is being organized by Grounding Wire, a new non-profit organization, founded by Frances and



Bill Champlin

Bret Borshell, a husband and wife team who want to help those struggling with anxiety and mental health disorders.

“Mental health issues are impacting the majority of Americans with 70 percent reporting that they have debilitating stress. Suicide is increasing at an alarming rate along with gun violence,” said Bret Borshell. “There aren’t enough resources to help those in need, especially in Southwest Florida. Hurricane Ian has made the situation even worse.”

Florida has long maintained one of the lowest per capita mental health expen-



Keith Howland

ditures in the nation. According to the most recent data from Florida State University, Florida has a per capita mental health services expenditure of \$37.28, giving it a rank of 49th for mental health funding in the U.S.

Mental Health of America recently ranked Florida 48th nationwide on access to mental health care. It specifically noted that 633,000 Florida adults with mental illness and 116,000 youth with depression had unmet treatment needs.

In addition to Hurricane Ian relief, funds raised from the concert will be used to provide mental health toolkits

to schools and individuals in need. The kits include guidance for active breathing, present mind awareness, and meditation, along with access to resources such as interactive content, videos, educational information, and other helpful digital content provided by mental health experts.

Bret Borshell said music is a wonderful coping mechanism for individuals who are recovering from the emotional trauma of Ian, so a concert is a logical way to provide resources while listening to great artists.

In addition to music, the festival will include mental health providers who can provide information about mental health resources available. Food trucks, beer, wine and healthy beverages also will be available for sale. A meditation station also will be provided.

Tickets are \$25 for general admission and \$65 for VIP admission, which includes private entrance, valet/preferred parking, hospitality tent and VIP seating. Tickets can be purchased at [HYPERLINK “http://www.groundingwire.org”](http://www.groundingwire.org)

Sponsorships also are available from \$500 to \$45,000. For more information about sponsorships, email [HYPERLINK “mailto:info@groundingwire.org”](mailto:info@groundingwire.org) info@groundingwire.org. ■



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