



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Mayor Gloria Secures City Council Approval of Historic 25-Year Lease for WorldBeat Center

AGREEMENT ALLOWS THE CULTURAL INSTITUTION TO CONTINUE OFFERING PROGRAMS, ART EXHIBITS, PERFORMANCES AND MORE

SAN DIEGO – In a historic move to secure the future of a cultural institution in San Diego, today the San Diego City Council approved a 25-year lease agreement with the WorldBeat Center in Balboa Park. Created as a multi-cultural arts organization, the WorldBeat Center has operated out of a former water tower building along Park Boulevard since 1995.

At the direction of Mayor Todd Gloria, City staff worked collaboratively over the past year with the WorldBeat Center to establish a 25-year nonprofit lease agreement that will allow the Center to continue providing cultural programs and classes, art exhibits, a public garden and more.

“For 30 years, the WorldBeat Center has provided cultural education and programming in a surplus water tank without formal recognition by the City,” said Mayor Todd Gloria. “This long-overdue agreement acknowledges the WorldBeat Center’s importance to the cultural diversity of Balboa Park. I am grateful to Makeda Dread Cheatom and our City staff for dedicating the time and building the trust necessary to get this done. I am confident that the continuity provided by this lease agreement will ensure that the WorldBeat Center will continue to thrive well into the future.”

Since its founding, the WorldBeat Center has been dedicated to promoting, preserving and celebrating the African diaspora and Indigenous cultures of the world. The center offers year-round classes in international dance and drumming, organic gardening and African History, along with children’s workshops and various entertainment events.

In 1995, the City granted a right of entry permit to the WorldBeat Center with the intent to ultimately enter into a long-term lease. With the lease agreement in place, the WorldBeat Center will be able to apply for federal and state grant funding to cover maintenance and improvement costs, and explore the opportunity to expand programming both indoors and outdoors.

“The signing of the new 25-year lease for the WorldBeat Center marks a significant milestone for District 3 and our city”, said Councilmember Stephen Whitburn. “This momentous occasion is a testament to our dedication to preserving cultural diversity and promoting unity. Let us celebrate this achievement that ensures the WorldBeat Center remains a vibrant hub for education, culture, and the arts for many years to come.”

“The WorldBeat Cultural Center has used the principles of Kwanzaa as a guide when facing adversities including Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination) and Imani (faith). Kwanzaa is about embracing our heritage, facing challenges with strength, and building a community grounded in cultural pride and mutual respect,” said Makeda Dread Cheatom, Executive Director and Founder of WorldBeat Cultural Center.

The lease agreement is consistent with provisions identified in the Master Plan for Balboa Park. In addition to a 25-year term, the agreement includes the option to extend for an additional 10 years. WorldBeat Center is responsible for improvements and repairs at the facility and will pay the City an annual nonprofit administrative cost recovery fee of approximately \$4,400.

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