



**GATORWOOD™**

FROM SLAVE TO SOLDIER

Dear Friends Meeting at Cambridge,

I am writing to propose to you an exciting program that will give us a unique opportunity to deepen our partnership in promoting social and racial justice through music.

At this year's International Day of Peace event on the Boston Common the theme was *Action*. When I was asked to speak, these were the words that flowed from my lips: "If we really want peace in today's society we are going to have to fight for it." And these words keep coming back to me. They describe the core of the philosophy of the work that I do. And your willingness to give the Stone of Hope Drum circle space to convene every Monday night at FMC continues to be instrumental in the growth of this mission. The journey to get to this point has been a long and arduous road, but the beautiful thing that this proposal represents is the culmination of a relationship that began with a vision from my dear late friend Greg Williams.

After your Sunday services, we follow up with our own worship service every Monday night. In these services, we learn about West African djembe music from Guinea and Mali, and we have discussions about what is happening around us and what it means to be a freedom fighter in today's political climate. For six years we have poured genuine love into that space and the scores of people that have attended our classes. I know that our spiritual residue is woven into the fabric of FMC already, and I am grateful for that.

When Greg connected us, he acknowledged that he had had a grueling uphill battle in his efforts to move the needle on black and brown community outreach in his years working with the Quakers. He also said that the road would be fraught with cross cultural miscommunication, but he was just as certain that I was equipped for the challenge, and if I was patient and took the opportunity to build this transformational program, that the Quaker Community would embrace it and support it. I hope you also feel as confident as I that we can do this work together.

I can't deny that life-changing spiritual moments have happened for me at FMC over the six years I have been here. They always came in moments when I considered walking away. These moments became reminders of the significance of Greg connecting us and then being called home. I feel the connection to FMC is something that is divine. We are spiritual kin and we are bound together to do this work.

This proposal represents a major step towards cementing a relationship that to this point has been ad hoc at best. In order for us to reap the benefits that this relationship presents, and to carry out the mission Greg Williams envisioned, it is necessary for us to have an honest conversation. I have shown dedication. I have shown a willingness to be a part of other Quaker programs such as Family Worship, Veterans For Peace, Camp Hawkeye, and the International Day of Peace. Stone of Hope has also branched out to the community with events of our own. My hope is that this proposal will take us closer to an equitable partnership where it is understood that I am more than a fringe element of the FMC community, or the pepper to spice up an event, but rather the founder of a thriving ministry that can do more if perceived and respected as such.

Sincerely,

SHARING THE HEALING MUSIC OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

02474

150 Massachusetts  
Avenue Arlington, MA

Ph: + 617.704.0926  
fromslavetosoldier@gmail.com

www.toussaintliberator.co  
m IG: @Gatorwoodpro



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## **Proposal to Develop a Self-Sustaining Masters Djembe Workshop Series**

Building on the success of my weekly drum classes, Stone of Hope wants to grow and enhance the exposure of West African music as a tool for healing and building a healthy multi-racial community.

The vision for **The Gatorwood Masters Djembe Workshop Series** is to expand on the work that is currently in progress at FMC. Your grant will be used to cover the cost of the first series of workshops. The money earned from ticket sales will create the foundation to establish our own, self sustaining, community drum school.

We are proposing a series of 12 workshops over the next two years. The schedule for each weekend workshop will be:

### **Friday**

5:30 - 7:00pm Meet and Greet with the Master Drummer. Refreshments and appetizers.

7:00 - 9:00pm Session 1

### **Saturday**

12:00 - 2:00pm Session 2

3:00 - 5:00pm Session 3

- Each workshop will start on a Friday with a light pre-workshop meal and meet and greet with the Master. The meet and greet is meant to be an opportunity for the participants to talk to the master teacher and purchase his or her merchandise on display. During this time the team will set up and make sure everything is ready for session 1..
- People can sign up for one, two or three sessions. Each session will cost \$40 or \$100 dollars for all three sessions. 60 people seems to be the cap on participants, but we do think some people would like to watch. \$5 tickets for children and \$10 for adults
- A total of 60 tickets will be sold for each session. Up to 30 members of FMC will be able to purchase tickets in advance. The other 30 tickets will be advertised at schools, churches, and centers that cater primarily to black and brown people. A portion of these tickets will be sold at a discount. There will be 10 additional scholarship (student) spots for people who would like to participate, but otherwise could not.
- Location will be at the : FMC Sanctuary

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## **Community Impact**

Gatorwood has identified its potential to be a drum school that is a signature program of the FMC community.

West African drumming is a healing activity that brings people of all walks of life and ability levels together. Going into a drumming trance together creates a vibration of healing and connectedness within the participants. Not only do we teach people about West African Culture and music, but we also create a model of what an inclusive, supportive, and equitable community looks like.

The goal of the workshop series is to fulfill Greg's vision of centering on black and brown people in our outreach efforts, enabling access to their rich cultural heritage. There are several black and brown people in Cambridge and the surrounding areas of Somerville, Medford and Arlington. We will be extending personal invitations to them through the churches, schools, and community centers that serve them.

## **Team Qualifications**

My team has created a framework that crystallizes our collective desire to share our knowledge and understanding of the djembe drum music of West Africa and turn it into a profitable business. That team—Audrey Diallo, is my left arm, (I am left-handed), friends and drummers from West Africa, and other people in the community and within my family who bring essential skills to the project.

- Treasurer: Ebony Barrett, Executive Management LLC, [exmcgroup.com](http://exmcgroup.com)
- FMC Liaisons: Dan Fitzmartin, Minga Clagget-Borne
- Marketing & Logistics: Toussaint, Audrey Diallo
- Master Drummer Assistants: Toussaint Paul Barrett, John Coster, Audrey Diallo, Lois Kaznicki, and Babacar Seck
- Senior Advisor: Ashley Herring

Executive Management Consulting Group ([exmc.com](http://exmc.com)) will act as our fiscal agent and Ebony Barrett will be the treasurer responsible for dispersing funds. EXMC is currently the fiscal agent for several non-profits.

Before my partnership with EXMC, Blackyard Afterschool acted as my fiscal agent. I ran a drumming program at the Plymouth County Correctional Facility for three years. As sole grant writer, I secured grants totaling \$18,500 for this program.

I have several grantors that can attest to my ability to produce and submit any financial records and programs reporting that you as the grantor may require. I will supply these references upon request.

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**Past and Present Engagements**

We have been gaining visibility by teaching in different locations in Greater Boston.

- Black Men Collective Boston
- Blackyard Afterschool Program in North Cambridge ‘21-present
- Boston Liberation Center Workshop Series in Roxbury
- Camp Hawkeye summer camp session ‘22 and ‘23
- Craft Food Hall Drum Circles in Waltham
- International School of Boston
- Jean Charles Academy Residency in Lynn.
- Plymouth County Correctional Facility (3 year program)
- Purdue University Juneteenth Drum Workshop
- Rogerson Adult Day Care Clinic Music Therapy Sessions serving a predominantly African, African-American and Caribbean population.

**Budget Request**

Each workshop will cost \$3500. We are proposing a series of 12 workshops over the next two years. The total request is for FMC to cover \$44,400.

Budget For One Workshop:

Prep, Execution, Drum Maintenance.....	\$1500
Refreshments and appetizers.....	\$200
Marketing & Promotion.....	\$250
Food & Lodging.....	\$250
Honorarium for Master Drummer.....	\$1000
Transportation.....	\$500
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>\$3700</b>

\$3700 x 12 workshops = \$44400

This is FMC’s opportunity to fund a winning strategy, philosophy, and business that FMC helped germinate and bring to fruition, while also honoring the late Greg Williams.

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### **Sustainability**

I am sure that this will evolve into a sustainable business if you choose to provide the seed money to launch it. We will be generating income not only through ticket sales, but also through online sales of the workshop videos. The series will also provide increased visibility, which in turn will raise more demand for our racially integrated programs.

With a full house, every workshop has the potential to generate between \$5250 - \$5850. After expenses that is \$1550 - \$2150. With these funds we could continue the series and expand even further in various ways. For example, I can already see trips back and forth to Africa and elsewhere to do drumming retreats; Ted Talks, lectures at colleges and universities, and community performances. We could even build a tour of the country using the Quaker network as a guide to do workshops at meetinghouses and local universities!!! Growth depends on how far we are willing to take it. The possibilities are endless!

### **Conclusion**

In closing, I would like to say that I hope that you will give this proposal serious and prayerful consideration. This is about legacy—Greg Williams' legacy. While we are doing this outreach and bringing many different people through the door at FMC, we are also preserving an oral tradition that is thousands of years old. While we are preserving this oral tradition, we are giving it back to its children. It is truly an honor to know the impact we will have. What started off as a \$1500 initial investment has turned into six years of dedicated work at the Friends Meetinghouse. There are several friends within this congregation who can testify to the growth they have witnessed in this group and the dedication I have shown to this work. This is a noble project that goes beyond just outreach. We are in the business of healing, community building, and cultural preservation. Attached I have included a couple of documents going into more detail about the philosophical foundations of Gatorwood so you can have a deeper understanding of the thought that has gone into this work and why it is important that we have a platform to carry this message forward.

Submitted by: Paul William Barrett Jr PKA Toussaint Liberator

September 28, 2023

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