

A New Beginning for George Park

Family fun promised at St. Johns' forgotten park

There will be an influx of smiles in St. Johns this summer, as The Kidz Outside returns to

George Park to infuse it with the special blend of music, wonder and imagination that got it pegged as one of the "Best Summer Events" by Portland Monthly last year. More than a music event, The Kidz Outside is an ongoing community-led effort to reimagine George Park, which sits nestled in the heart of St. Johns between Roosevelt High School, George Middle School and two elementary schools that has garnered significant steam over the years. After last year's kickoff brought out hundreds to the 2-acre green-space that most neighbors say rarely has any events happening in it, the event producers are prepared to go even bigger, teaming up again with Portland Parks and Recreation's Summer Free for All program to bring C'est La, Yawa (formerly known as Amenta Abioto) & event co-founder Mat Ran-



Kids of all ages taking part of the 'Crowd The Kidz Outside' Festival.

dol to the big stage.

Year one left an impression, with nearly 300 kids and families filling out a night of all-ages amusement that had folks hanging out long after the last song had been sung. Randol hopes to recreate and multiple that energy for year 2. Randol, a veteran wordsmith who shared the stage at last year's kickoff with then 10-year-

old rapper J. Prodigy, says he's excited to expand the event with fellow rapper C'est La and 2018 Best New Band artist Yawa whose described her live often freestyled performances as a blend of "synthy, rocky, soul, hip-hop" in the past. "Performing at the inaugural The Kidz Outside Festival meant so much to me it's hard to put into words. Seeing the commu-

nity come out in full fledge support, seeing all these young kids engaged meant everything to me," says Randol whose fresh off the release of his latest single 'Fast Forward' whose visuals comically showcase him as a senior citizen at iconic locals like Irving Park, Providence Park and of course unofficial North Portland logo, the St. John's Bridge. "I'm really

looking forward to having Yawa and C'est La join us this year because both artists are multi talented and bring unique styles to the stage this year from the rapping, singing and producing aspect.

Stationed right during back-to-school season, TKO Fest will also be bringing back a highly popular fixture of last year's event: a backpack and supply giveaway. For year one, through partnership with Tenacious Rose they were able to hand out 70 backpacks, along with countless pencils, pens, notebooks, binders and other classrooms to help kids be ready for school. This year, they're planning to hand out more: 140 "I remember being in high-school and not having the funds or resources to have my own graphing calculator. It was embarrassing." says LaQuisha Minnieweather, co-founder of Tenacious Rose. "Now it is a passion of mine to make sure our students have what they need to be and feel successful. Last year, we handed out 70 backpacks. I look forward to doubling that amount."

The backpacks aren't the only fixture making a return -- Portland's favorite clown Nikki Brown Clown will also be on hand again, making balloon animals, setting up bean bag toss competitions and keeping the vibes high.

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