



Flash! in the Pans Pandemic Steel Appeal

Almost 30 years ago, when Carl Chase advertised for anyone interested in learning to play steel drums, he didn't see this coming! Hundreds of gigs. Well over a hundred players. Thousands of audience members. Thousands of dollars raised for our community non-profits. Thousands of notes learned, thousands of cow bell clicks and tunes begun, thousands of hands in the air when the music moves them so sweet. This has been the story of steelband or 'pan' music in Blue Hill and all the surrounding towns.

For two decades, Flash! in the Pans has dedicated their Summer concert schedule to helping our communities, by pledging street dance donations to other nonprofits. Animal shelters, soup kitchens, health organizations, grange halls, historical societies, land trusts, summer camps, community centers, and local libraries have all benefited. But there's never been a dollar sign placed on the value that Blue Hill's steelbands provide. The joy the community shares in gathering to dance together is one of a kind. Dancers—from tippy toddlers to slow-grooving elders to leaping teenagers—all move together in exuberant unison. As musicians, our success has always depended on the energy and vitality of the audience before us. We have been ever grateful to our audiences. This year, we need your energy and love for steelband music to manifest in a very different way.

We won't beat around the bush: without a street dance season this past summer, Peninsula Pan, the nonprofit parent organization of Flash!, is in rough financial condition. We rely almost entirely on the income we receive from Flash! gigs to pay for our Music Director, organizational expenses, and, importantly, for scholarships for student pan players in Planet Pan and Rhythm Rockets. This year, with COVID 19, all that income has disappeared. With limited ability to gather, rehearse, and share music together, we are fighting to not just make ends meet for the year, but for the very future of steelband music on the Blue Hill peninsula. We don't like to imagine the silence of a Monday night without our community gathering together to celebrate in movement and music, and we know you don't either.

That's why we're asking for your help. This is the first time in our history we've made such a direct financial appeal. Can you pitch in a few dollars to ensure the future of our community steelbands? We're exploring COVID-safe ways to practice so we will be in a strong position to take back the parks, streets, and gazebos as soon as it is safe to do so. If you've ever played a pan, tapped your toes to a Soca melody, swayed to the music, or jumped and danced to Jab Jab, we need you! Please consider a tax-deductible gift to Peninsula Pan today! Go to our website peninsulapan.org and hit the Donate button, or send a check to Peninsula Pan, Inc., 677 Bagaduce Road, Brooksville, ME 04617. And please make sure to give us your mailing address so we can properly thank you—pan style!

The Peninsula Pan Board of Directors—Sandy Phoenix, Matthew Freedman, Diane Bossert, Martin Conte, Susan Haggstrom, Courtenay Haight, Tom Leigh, Fiona Schubeck