



By: **Wendy Ochoa**
AnnArbor.com
Intern

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS: Westgate Festival: a learning environment, community drive for S.O.S, and back to school sales

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Gorgeous George and the All Greek Band perform at the 2009 Westgate Festival

Photo courtesy of Tim Patino

The second annual **Westgate Festival**, scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 28, from noon to 7 p.m., will have a back-to-school theme this year. But the festival, which is held in the parking lot of the Westgate shopping center, will not just be about back-to-school sales, organizer **Tim Patino** said.

Patino said that one goal of the festival is to support the **S.O.S Community Crisis Center in Ypsilanti**. Merchants will be collecting donations of school supplies and non-perishable food items. The collection drive started Aug. 3 and runs through the end of the festival.

"The idea is to fill **Sun & Snow's** van (with the supplies) and drive it over to the center," Patino said.

The festival will feature events for all ages. One stage will have local musicians, including jazz guitarist **John E. Lawrence**. The other stage will have family-friendly activities, Patino said. Karate demonstrations, activities from the **Leslie Science Center** and a pet contest are among those tentatively scheduled.

"We want to create a learning environment as well," Patino said.

Many of the businesses will have their own activities planned beside those that are on the stages.

Just Baked, one of the businesses actively involved in organizing the festival, has a cupcake walk planned for outside the store, and will have a session inside where festival goers can decorate their own cupcakes, said **Angie Donahue**, manager of the Westgate store.

Donahue said Just Baked, which opened its Ann Arbor location in February of this year, wanted to get involved in the west side community.

Patino said a big part of the festival will be an ambassador program. Each festival goer will be given a card to get stamped by participating merchants. Every completed card can then be entered into a prize rally. Patino noted that people need not be present to win.

Patino said the festival was originally started to promote businesses on the west side of Ann Arbor, but he said it is open to non-profits as well.



"We still have room for non-profits and other vendors as well," Patino said. He added that those interested in being a part of the festival should contact him via the festival website, www.westgatefestival.com

Wendy Ochoa is a journalism student at



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