



Marching toward unity: Local crusade hopes to put unity back into community

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
July 28 2016 5:40 AM



ALTON - A crusade by a local spiritual leader promises to put the "unity" back into "community."

Local business owner and Alton Police Department chaplain **Jason Harrison** is working with other spiritual leaders across the River Bend, spanning denominations, social classes and skin color to bring a sense of unity to the community. A crusade illustrating that concept will launch on July 31 and continue through Aug. 5. Each day of that week will feature a different aspect and speaker on the topic of unity at a lot adjacent to **2nd Chances Community Church**, located at 4836 N Alby in Godfrey. "Each day has a different speaker from a different church," Harrison said. "Every day is focused on unity. We will be speaking about what a unified community would look like." Speakers during the crusade will include **Darren Carstens** from **Enjoy Church**, **Roy Rhodes** from **Abundant Life** and Harrison's brother, **Marcus Harrison** from **Deliverance Temple** among others. "The crusade is both spiritually and life empowering with lessons taught with music, dancing and great singers from every denomination in the River Bend area," Jason Harrison said. That crusade will lead to a unity march and job fair, which will both be held on Aug. 6. The unity march will begin at the **Scott Bib Center** and end at the **Liberty Bank Riverfront Amphitheater**. The Scott Bib Center is located at the site of the former **St. Patrick's School** and is named in honor of **Scott Bib** who, with **Minnie Bib**, formed a school for black students when segregation was illegally enforced in schools. Marchers are invited to park at the amphitheater at 7:30 a. m. Aug 6 and will be taken by vans to the Scott Bibb Center. The march will take place at 8 a.m. and conclude at the amphitheater by 9 a.m. At 9 a.m. a job fair will commence at the amphitheater. Jason Harrison said representatives from several local businesses will be recruiting for positions, including: **Toyota, Laidlaw, Beverly Farm, OSF St. Anthony's, AT&T, Sprint, Auto Butler** and **Quality GMC Cadillac Buick**. Jason Harrison hopes the combination of a crusade, march and job fair will cause people to divert time from their typical routines and pay attention to the need for unity in their community. "The main thing I believe separates us from unity is a lack of relationships," he said. "You can't build relationships until you get to know somebody." He said everybody he has spoken to believes in the importance and need for unity. He said the main issue with putting those beliefs into action is simply taking the first step. "One of the biggest hindrances is people not wanting to be inconvenienced," Jason Harrison said. "People love the idea in general, but getting them to take that first step, which gets in the way of their routines, is a no-no." Because of those fears and attachments regarding routine, Jason Harrison is attacking the issue with a three-pronged movement. That movement includes the uniting forces of music, food, fun, spirituality and employment.