

Annual Juneteenth event returns June 15 in Vallejo

'IT TAKES A VILLAGE'

Times-Herald staff report

One of the more important Vallejo events returns this month as the city celebrates the 31st Annual Juneteenth Festival on June 15.

Under the theme “It Takes a Village,” Vallejo’s celebration will take place from **11 a.m. to 4 p.m.** inside Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, located behind the John F. Kennedy Public Library along Georgia Street. The Rev Dr. Terrence Nichols, pastor of New Hope Community Church, will emcee the event.

Starting in Galveston, Texas in 1865, the event recognizes June 19 as African American Emancipation Day and has since become a celebrated event worldwide.

“Juneteenth will offer an abundance of exhibitors promoting education, employment, health and financial wealth building,” according to a press release announcing the event.

The day will be filled with live entertainment featuring local bands and performers including DW Edwards Lighting Up the Soul, Emile Vincent, Joyce Grant, and Rosie Pugh. Gospel music will be performed by the Northbay Community Choir in addition to youth performances by singer/songwriter Unique Praiz, and martial arts demonstrations by Soaring Eagles Tae Kwon Do Academy, the release states. Merchants will be selling clothing, accessories, health and beauty products, books, and more. Food vendors will be selling barbeque and fried fish dinners, stuffed baked potatoes, desserts, corn dogs and chicken nuggets for the kids.

Visitors are encouraged to bring donations of school supplies to “Pack the Bus” which will be used to stock the Teacher Supply Store at Vallejo High School.

Items most needed are: notebook paper, folders, pens, pencils, tissue and hand sanitizer.

The Vallejo Police Department will offer child safety fingerprinting and the Vallejo Firefighter Youth Academy will have a huge trailer with hands-on activities to teach children about fire prevention and safety, officials added.

blood pressure and BMI checkups and learn how to manage stress, eat healthy and stay active. Physicians will be on hand to answer questions and Kaiser Permanente members can book appointments and receive other preventive health screenings. Solano County health professionals will provide free dental check ups and HIV testing.

Residents can learn about Vallejo’s recycling program through interactive displays, games and a photo booth.

The annual event was organized by the non-profit Solano County African Family Celebration Committee, also known as the African American Family Reunion Committee. The event’s major sponsors include Kaiser Permanente and the city of Vallejo Recycling Division.

For more information, visit the website at vallejojuneteenth.com or call (707) 322-0147.

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A Kaiser Permanente physician answers questions by a visitor to the 2018 Juneteenth festival while others wait to attend a free health seminar.

COURTESY PHOTO BY ANGELA JONES

Winners of the Juneteenth Essay and Poster contest will be announced at the event.

Visitors are encouraged to stop by Kaiser Permanente's Mobile Health Unit for