



**African American  
Juneteenth Family Reunion Committee**  
P.O. Box 5196  
Vallejo, CA 94591  
[www.vallejojunteenth.com](http://www.vallejojunteenth.com)

April 29, 2019

Dear Youth Group Coordinator of Middle School Students in Solano County:

In celebration of Vallejo's 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary commemorating Juneteenth, the members of the 2019 African American Family Reunion Committee (AAFRC) invite your sixth, seventh, and eighth graders to participate in the **Fifth Essay/Poster Contest** sponsored by Juneteenth AAFRC. The theme for this year's event is *"It Takes a Village."* This celebration is held in recognition of the outstanding culture, solid history, and strong heritage of African American people. The 2019 Juneteenth Celebration will be held on **Saturday, June 15, 2019, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park (behind the JFK Library), Santa Clara and Georgia Streets, Vallejo, CA.**

Each year we invite churches, businesses, organizations, health, education & service groups, craft & food vendors, non-profits and local entertainers to participate in this outstanding community event. We believe this event promotes community diversity and we believe that a unified and diverse community is necessary to address the challenges that African American families face in education, health, family life, employment and community development.

Accompanying this letter is a brief historical description about the Juneteenth Celebration, **Essay Contest Rules, Poster Contest Rules, Youth Essay and Poster Contest Entry Form, and Certification Form** which are also located on our website. The names of all winners and their awards will be announced at Juneteenth. The following awards will be given this year. **The school or youth group in Solano County that has the most number (over 20) of participants, who followed all the contests rules, will receive a monetary award of two hundred dollars (\$200) which will be announced and issued to the principal of the school or his/her designee or youth group coordinator or his/her designee at the event. If a representative from the school or youth group coordinator or designee is not present at the event to receive the \$200 award, the award will be mailed.** The first and second place winners in each contest will receive a monetary gift card of fifty dollars (\$50) and twenty-five dollars (\$25) respectively. One Honorable Mention in each contest will receive a ribbon. The first place essay winner will be given the opportunity to read a selected portion of his/her essay at the event. The first place poster contest winner will be given the opportunity to describe at the event how his/her poster depicts this year's theme for Juneteenth. At the event, all other contest participants, who followed all of the contest rules, will receive a certificate of participation for submitting an entry for the Essay Contest and/or Poster Contest.

**The African American Family Reunion Committee anxiously looks forward to your sixth, seventh, and eighth graders' participation in the Fifth Essay/Poster Contest for the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Juneteenth Celebration. Thanks in advance for sharing this contest information with your applicable grade level students and their parents/guardians.**

Sincerely,

/s/A. Marie Young

Essay/Poster Contest Coordinator

2019 African American Family Reunion Committee

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## What is Juneteenth?

Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration commemorating the end of slavery in the United States. Dating back to 1865, it was on **June 19<sup>th</sup>** that the Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston, Texas with news that the war had ended and the enslaved were now free. Note that this was two and a half years after President Lincoln's Proclamation – which had become official January 1, 1863. The

Emancipation Proclamation had little impact on the Texans due to the minimal number of Union troops to enforce the new Executive order. However, with the surrender of General Lee in April of 1865, and the arrival of General Granger's regiment, the forces were finally strong enough to influence and overcome the resistance.

To celebrate this historical event, African Americans celebrate Juneteenth with a celebration of family, friends, community, and freedom. The purpose of the Juneteenth event is to recognize the great contributions and historic achievements of African Americans, to address solidarity in the African American community, and to address and create a space for African Americans to make proactive choices in the face of national concerns impacting the African American families including education, health and wellness, substance abuse, violence, and economic stability.

## Juneteenth in Vallejo

In Vallejo, the African American community continues to celebrate the tradition of Juneteenth in the same spirit. The Vallejo Juneteenth Celebration, entitled African American Family Reunion Celebration, was modeled after the celebration adopted by the National Council of Negro Women. The Vallejo chapter of the National Council of Negro Women, one of the original sponsoring organizations, continues to participate in the planning of this celebration with many other organizations and partners including the Continental of Omega Boys and Girls Club, and the local chapters of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated and Jack and Jill of America, Incorporated. These organizations, which are concerned with the well-being and camaraderie of Vallejo and Solano County's African American community, continue to support the success of the Vallejo Juneteenth Celebration each year.

The Juneteenth Planning Committee comes together each year to provide a peaceful, engaging fun, festive and entertaining atmosphere to connect attendees and participants to local organizations that provide health screenings and wellness information as well as employment and educational opportunities. This year we are partnering with representatives from various health organizations to provide free health information and medical screenings for attendees.

In addition to the comprehensive information and education about health and wellness, we are inviting community/civic organizations, businesses, social and religious groups to participate.

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