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Mayor Weinberger Announces 2023 Juneteenth Celebration

Burlington, Vt. – Mayor Miro Weinberger announces the City of Burlington will once again host a celebration of culture, history, and community for Juneteenth. This year’s Juneteenth festivities are presented by the City of Burlington’s Office of Racial, Equity Inclusion & Belonging (REIB) and Northfield Savings Bank, and will take place on Saturday, June 17, from 11 am to 11 pm.

The "Embrace & Belonging" themed Juneteenth Celebration will showcase various arts and cultural expressions for every Burlingtonian to enjoy. The unforgettable day-long event is free and open to all and promises 12 hours of non-stop entertainment featuring over 50 performers across multiple iconic locations in Burlington's vibrant downtown.

"I am very proud to be part of a city that celebrates Juneteenth's rich history and culture. This year's theme, 'Embrace & Belonging,' is a testament to Burlington's commitment to inclusivity, unity, and community," said Mayor Miro Weinberger. "As we gather on this important day, let us also reflect on our collective responsibility to foster an environment of understanding, respect, and equality for all Burlingtonians. I invite every resident and visitor to join us on June 17 to commemorate the emancipation of enslaved Blacks, celebrate Black culture, and to acknowledge the continuous journey towards a more equitable society."

"We are thrilled to present this year's Juneteenth Celebration, which promises to be a day of inspiration, unity, and celebration," said REIB Director Kim Carson. "Through music, art, dialogue, and shared experiences, we continue to recognize that the fight for racial equality is ongoing and that black voices must continue to be amplified and elevated, centered on both black liberation and progress. We hope to honor the significance of Juneteenth, and those often-muted voices and foster a shared sense of belonging and empowerment within our community."

The Juneteenth Celebration will take place across multiple locations, including City Hall Park, Contois Theatre, Burlington City Arts, The Flynn Theatre, Lower Church Street, Main Street, Flynn Space, and Amy E. Tarrant Gallery. This diverse range of venues will provide a dynamic backdrop for the celebration, showcasing the rich cultural tapestry of our community. The city expects over 1500 attendees.

Vermonters and visitors alike are invited to Burlington on June 17 to come together to commemorate Juneteenth and embrace the values of racial equity, social justice, and community.

Attendees will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in a variety of engaging activities and experiences, including:

- **Gospel Brunch:** Join us for a soulful gospel brunch experience that will uplift your spirit and celebrate unity hosted by Reverend Mark Hughes of Vermont's only Black Church New Alpha Missionary Baptist Church with Acknowledgements by Deacon Roy V. and Shirley Hill, all backed by the Juneteenth Community Choir led by Musical Director Dexter Criss.
- **Music:** Enjoy live musical performances spanning various genres from the area's most talented artists, all leading up to Internationally renowned and 2-time Grammy-winning Conscious Hip Hop group Arrested Development performing at the Flynn Theater
- **Poetry:** Hosted by Rajnii Eddins, get captivated by the power of the spoken word and poetry, with performances celebrating self-expression's beauty and speaking truth to power.
- **Comedy:** Hosted by Marlon Fisher, get prepared to laugh way out loud as local comedians remind us that laughing is food for the soul.
- **Community Conversations:** Engage in meaningful discussions and dialogues exploring essential topics related to The History of Juneteenth Youth Empowerment. Bobby Dean Hackney will tell tales with accompanying photos of his new book chronicling "The Vermont Reggae Fest."
- **Visual Art:** Community Canvases is an inclusive art project that aims to inspire artistic collaboration among all members of our community. This program provides a platform for individuals of all ages and backgrounds to come together and express their creativity. With art supplies and canvases readily available, participants are encouraged to contribute their unique artistic perspectives to a collective masterpiece.
- **Food & Beverages: The Juneteenth Supper Club** is an integral part of our evening celebration, where we bring the community together for a shared meal in the heart of Main Street. From 4:30 pm to 7:00 pm, we will transform Main Street into a long dining table, symbolizing unity and fostering a sense of belonging for all. This unique dining experience will be surrounded by other food, beverage, and dessert vendors in the enclosed area, allowing us to create a vibrant and communal atmosphere. This is free to the public.
- **Wellness Workshops:** While centered around BIPOC participants, it welcomes everyone, fostering diversity. Through yoga, meditation, and massage, we create an environment celebrating and supporting BIPOC experiences while promoting unity. Join us to collectively revive, nourish, and thrive, regardless of your background.
- **Family Fun:** Welcome to the Adventure Playground, where the spirit of excitement thrives, and joy knows no bounds. This vibrant space is dedicated to igniting fun, laughter, and limitless joy for young people of all ages and their families.
- **BTV Market:** As part of our commitment to uplifting Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) vendors, we have partnered with the BCA to prioritize BIPOC artisans, organizations and food and beverage vendors where possible.

Juneteenth is the oldest American holiday celebrating Black Americans descended from the formerly enslaved.

Known as Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, and Jubilee Day, it has been celebrated by Black Americans since the late 1800s. The holiday commemorates June 19, 1865, when Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas, and announced the end of slavery, two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued. In 1980, Texas became the first state to recognize Juneteenth as an official state holiday, and in 2021 it was officially recognized as an American

Federal holiday; It is commemorated through various events across the United States, including Burlington and Vermont.

This year's Juneteenth celebration theme, "**Embrace & Belonging**," speaks to the collective work we must do as a community to continue the efforts to actualize the promises of freedom and the right and privileges afforded to full citizenship in the United States, Burlington, and Vermont. "Embrace & Belonging" encourages Burlingtonians to intentionally practice and support Black people living authentically in all places and spaces.

For more information and a detailed schedule of events, please visit www.btvjuneteenth.com.

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High-resolution photos and additional media assets are available upon request.