

# Learn.Grow.EVOLVE

## What is Juneteenth?

By Kori Shingles, REAC member, City of St. Louis Park

Juneteenth is a day that not many know about. It certainly has not been in the curriculum at most schools, and it is not a holiday that is widely celebrated. As a black American, I'm embarrassed to admit that I've only known about it for a few years, yet it is so important and such a turning point in the lives of my ancestors. I cringe when I think about the barriers, lack of awareness, and society's fragility that have kept me from recognizing and celebrating this momentous occasion.

In case you aren't familiar with Juneteenth, the History Channel provides some interesting facts about this "longest running African American holiday": "Juneteenth, (short for "June Nineteenth") marks the day when federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas in 1865 to take control of the state and ensure that all enslaved people be freed. The troops' arrival came a full two and a half years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. Juneteenth honors the end to slavery in the United States and is considered the longest-running African American holiday." Though it is just becoming recognized as a federal holiday, many in the African American community across the country have celebrated Juneteenth with parades, cookouts, reunions, and rejoicing in Black culture.

I encourage you to learn more, like I am, and acknowledge that many people in the African American community may think differently about July 4th, Independence Day, as African Americans were not free on July 4, 1776.

This year I am excited to celebrate with my family and create more awareness in my



community about Juneteenth and why it is important for us all to acknowledge.

[Click here](#) for more resources on Juneteenth!



**"Activism is not a one week performative act. It's a lifetime commitment to educating yourself, listening to constructive criticism, learning from your mistakes, doing your research, and staying aware."**

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