



JUNETEENTH: CELEBRATE FREEDOM

The West Suburban YMCA continues to embark on a long-term initiative to strengthen our organization's diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging policies and actions. Juneteenth is approaching on June 19th and the West Suburban YMCA recognizes and honors the significance of this holiday. It marks a day of liberation, resilience, and fortitude for Black Americans.

A lot of the work that has been going on in our weekly Friday Afternoon Staff Conversations has been education. This is a great opportunity to learn more about Juneteenth, what it stands for and why it is important to know about it. Juneteenth is a holiday that commemorates the official end of slavery. Despite the Emancipation Proclamation two years prior, Texas was the most remote of the slave states with low union representation and increasing slave population. Juneteenth is a symbol of total freedom from slave trade across *all* states, *including* Texas.

As we continue our education to learn more about the history of racism and social injustice, below are resources staff and our community are encouraged to explore, as we continue to learn and reflect and proactively move towards being a true anti-racist organization.

- Article from the Boston Globe (6/13/21) ["Juneteenth and the Meaning of Black Liberation in Boston"](#)
- [Local Juneteenth Celebrations](#)

Below are a list of videos that can be watched to learn more about the history of Juneteenth. We recommend that you not only watch them, but that you share them with your family/children and other adults in hopes that it will inspire terrific conversations not just about the meaning of Juneteenth itself, but why it really matters for everyone to know about it.

- [What is Juneteenth?](#) (4:00 minutes)
- [Juneteenth: Freedom At Last](#) (5:40 minutes, Minnesota History)
- [Juneteenth: What You Need to Know](#) (3:25 minutes, History Channel)
- [Juneteenth- All About the Holidays](#) (1:25 minutes, PBS Kids)
- [What is Juneteenth and Why do we Celebrate?](#) (7:47 minutes, BrainPOP- Kids)

