



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact:**

Chuck Finnie

(510) 583-4344

[chuck.finnie@hayward-ca.gov](mailto:chuck.finnie@hayward-ca.gov)

# **Juneteenth in Hayward—Freedom Celebration event, flag raisings, Hayward Public Library exhibits and programs**

**HAYWARD, Calif.**, June 5, 2024—Juneteenth, the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the end of slavery in the United States, is being observed in Hayward with a downtown event, flag raisings, and exhibits and programs at Hayward Public Library throughout the month of June.

Headlining the Juneteenth observances, the West Coast Blues Society and Juneteenth Hayward will present the Fourth Annual Juneteenth Freedom Celebration, on Saturday, June 22, from noon to 6 p.m., at the Heritage Plaza, 835 C Street, with live music, a variety of foods, other vendors, and a beer and wine garden. Kicking off the musical performances will be Leo Oliver and The Blues Knockouts, Hayward’s residential blues band, followed by special appearances by the Russell City Memorial Blues Band, The West Coast Caravan of All Starts, featuring the legendary Fillmore Slim, Mississippi Chuck Wallace, rhythm and blues (R&B) crooner Karl Bracy, Michael Skinner singing Southern Soul and R&B, plus Reggie Rolls and other special guests.

Family- and youth-oriented activities and entertainment at the Juneteenth Freedom Celebration will include the Black Cowboy Coalition, Moonbug Entertainment’s very own Meekah, apparatus and demonstrations by the Hayward Fire, Maintenance Services and Police departments, Hayward Public Library bookmobile Curbie, as well as art and recreation features presented by the Hayward Arts Council Gallery and Hayward Area Recreation and Park District (HARD).

Hayward Public Library will be marking the occasion with book displays and decorating both library branches from June 10 through the end of the month. In addition, there will be two special free programs. On June 13, Unique Derique, “Clown Prince of Fools,” will entertain children of all ages with a 45-minute tribute to Juneteenth, including the history of the Hambone body percussion technique, and comedy juggling. This program will be in the Fremont Bank room in the Downtown library starting at 1 p.m. On Saturday, June 15, the Library will partner with San Francisco Opera to present the program

“Black Voices in American Opera.” SF Opera’s Educational Content Coordinator, Cole Thomason-Redus, will present a historical and musical exploration of the careers and recordings of pioneers such as Camilla Williams, Simon Estes and Marian Anderson, and mid-century superstars such as Leontyne Price, along with other modern-day masters of American opera. This program will be held in the Fremont Bank Room starting at 11 a.m. Though not required, please register [here](#).

Additionally, at noon on Tuesday, June 18, the City of Hayward will host ceremonial raisings of the Juneteenth and Pan African flags, in recognition of the long history of African American liberation efforts which inspired racial equity and freedom movements around the world. Later that day, an equity-focused proclamation will be read at the City Council meeting.

Celebrated each year on June 19, Juneteenth, also known as Emancipation Day and Freedom Day, is an observance of the effective end of slavery in the United States. On June 19, 1865, almost two and a half years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, Union Army Major Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, to announce the end of both the Civil War and slavery to more than 250,000 enslaved Black people, one of the last group of slaves to be freed in the United States. While Juneteenth became a federally recognized holiday in 2021, it has been celebrated in African American communities for over 150 years.