

Juneteenth

Juneteenth celebrates the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation to the enslaved people of Texas on June 19, 1965, more than two and a half years after Abraham Lincoln originally issued it. This marked the official ending of slavery in the United States. It was not the end of the fight, but rather, the beginning in the quest for equality. The name Juneteenth comes from the melding of June and Nineteenth, or June 19th. Juneteenth emphasizes education and achievement.



Juneteenth History Share the history of Juneteenth with your staff and residents. [Juneteenth History](#)

Juneteenth Gathering A typical Juneteenth gathering includes family, friends, and barbeque, along with red soda. The custom of red drinks and foods at a Juneteenth celebration is a symbol of ingenuity and resilience in bondage. Some have also linked the symbolism to the blood shed throughout the institution of slavery. Learn how to make [strawberry syrup](#) for strawberry soda drinks.



Film Fest Many films depict the Middle Passage, the history of slavery in America, and the continued struggle for civil rights. You might choose to view a film before screening it for your residents. Also important are films celebrating achievements of black Americans. Here are some suggestions: *Amistad*, *Sankofa*, *Roots*, *Glory*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Beloved*, *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, *Hidden Figures*, *Lee Daniels' the Butler*, *Remember the Titans*, *42*, *Selma*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Loving*, and *The Green Book*.



Guest Choir Spiritual and gospel music are important parts of African American heritage. Check your town or local churches to see if a gospel choir might be willing to come and perform for you residents and include them in a sing-along.

Oral Histories Oral history enables people to share their stories in their own words, with their own voices, through their own understanding of what happened and why. Your residents probably have fascinating and unique stories to share about their experiences during civil rights movement. Allowing them to share their stories with teens might be a great intergenerational experience for all involved.



African Jewelry The significance of African beads varies by nation, region, and the groups of people who create and use them. Teach your residents how to use recycled magazines to make colorful beads for beautiful African jewelry. [Bead Tutorial](#)



Mancala Mancala is an easy-to-learn African strategy game. Host a Mancala tournament for residents and their guests. Inexpensive Mancala sets can be purchased, or your residents can make their own sets using craft stones and egg cartons. [Rules to Mancala](#)



Read Aloud Check your local library for children's books about Juneteenth and black history. Invite groups of children to come and listen to your residents read the books aloud. Or you could record your residents reading the books. Donate the recordings and copies of the books to local schools and children's centers. Here are some suggestions: *Malcolm Little, Let It Shine, Unstoppable, The Day You Begin, Schomburg: The Man Who Built a Library, Viola Desmond won't be budged, The Legendary Miss Lena Horne, Harlem's Little Blackbird, Little Leaders, Coretta Scott, Rosa, Sit In.*





Host a Unity Walk (or Roll) Host a Unity walk within your community. Invite family, friends, staff, and neighborhood guests to walk in celebration of cultural diversity. Encourage costumes, colorful banners, decorations, and music.

Design a Flag Juneteenth flag designer L.J. Graf packed lots of meaning into her design. The colors red, white, and blue echo the American flag to symbolize that the enslaved people and their descendants were Americans. The star in the middle pays homage to Texas, while the bursting "new star" on the "horizon" of the red and blue fields represents a new freedom and a new people. Discuss the flag design with your residents. What changes would you make? How would you design a flag for your community?



Emancipation Proclamation Find a volunteer to read the text of the Emancipation Proclamation to your residents. Have a round table discussion about how different groups of people might have reacted at that time.



[Emancipation Proclamation](#)

Amazing Grace Everyone has heard the song "Amazing Grace," written by John Newton, but how many know the story? Share the music and story with your residents. ["Amazing Grace" story](#)



Biographies Juneteenth celebrates African Americans' educational achievements and advancements. Learn more about the lives of these incredible men and women. Partner with a local school. Ask the students to make posters illustrating the biographies of various people. If possible, have the children come and speak about their poster. Use the posters to decorate your community and promote the celebration of Juneteenth. You can also find biographies on your iN2L system (Veterans/History > Black History) [Famous African Americans](#)

Book Club: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Born into a family of slaves, Frederick Douglass educated himself through sheer determination. His unconquered will to triumph over his circumstances makes this one of America's best and most unlikely success stories. Form a book club and share his inspirational story with your residents.



Share Your Culture Juneteenth celebrates African American freedom, while encouraging self-development and respect for all cultures. Give your residents a chance to share their culture with each other. They can tell a story, plan a meal, or share pictures.