

## SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE AT CINCINNATI JUNETEENTH FESTIVAL

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PHOTO PROVIDED BY CINCINNATI JUNETEENTH

An occasion to celebrate one of the most important events in American history, Juneteenth, the oldest known celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States, is observed nationwide in at least 43 states and 250 cities across the U. S.

Celebrated in Cincinnati (OH) since 1988, the Cincinnati Juneteenth Festival 2014 is set for June 14<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup>.

Nearly 13 hours of cultural discovery, education, and celebration will take place in Daniel Drake Park, the site of the very first Cincinnati Juneteenth Festival, located in Kennedy Heights in Silverton (OH).

"Juneteenth is a time of jubilation when we celebrate the biggest African American victory." expressed a Festival patron.

One of at least 3 celebrations in Ohio, this is the 27<sup>th</sup> year of the Cincinnati Juneteenth Festival.

What began locally as a neighborhood festival in 1988 attracting 1,500 attendees has grown into an annual, anticipated, Tri-state event drawing as many as an estimated 20,000. This year, an anticipated 5,000 -6,000 people of all ages and races from across the Tri-state are expected to take part in the festival weekend to learn American History as it relates to African Americans while enjoying food, music, and friends.

"My Grandmother used to bring me to Juneteenth." said a Festival patron.



*The 27th Cincinnati Juneteenth Festival takes place June 14 -15, 2014 in Daniel Drake Park in Kennedy Heights. FREE and open to the public, the family friendly event—with something for all ages - is anticipated to draw a crowd of 5,000—6,000 from across the Tri-state. (Photo | Cincinnati Juneteenth)*

"Now I bring my children."

This year, the exhilarating, stimulating festival weekend kicks off on Saturday June 14<sup>th</sup> with a parade of 76 country flags representing the countries in Africa and other continents from which people were taken and the countries to which they were taken and enslaved.

Throughout the weekend, the Cincinnati Juneteenth Festival, a diverse and family-friendly event staffed entirely with over 200 volunteers, will feature a variety of free activities including Abe Lincoln, Frederick Douglas, and a Buffalo Soldier historical re-enactors; rep-

resentation from the Montford Point Marines, the first Black Marines to serve in the U.S. Marine Corps, and the Tuskegee Airmen, group of African American pilots who fought in WW II; exhibits/exhibitors; traditional story-telling; magic acts; horseback riding, petting zoo, face painting, the mascot Mr. Redlegs, games, and prizes for children; a sweet potato pie bake-off; Health pavilion; hands for freedom quilt; an education pavilion; oratorical contest; and live music (blues, African drumming & dancing, R&B, gospel, jazz, reggae, etc.).

"It's not an official holiday, but, considering what it celebrates," said

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## SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE AT CINCINNATI JUNETEENTH FESTIVAL (CONT'D)



*From the Parade of Flags (top) to a variety of activities (bottom), there is something for everyone at the 27th Cincinnati Juneteenth Festival. It's all FREE and open to the public!*



MarTinez Butts, guitarist/leader of the band Basic Truth, in an email to AboutGreaterCincinnati.com, "in my opinion it's just as important and special as holidays like Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day."

Basic Truth, among the 2014 festival entertainment, will take the stage and perform true old-school R&B, soul, and funk at the festival for the 11<sup>th</sup> straight year. The scheduled weekend entertainment lineup also includes the Rick James Stone City Band (R&B/funk) and Elder Melvin Taylor & The Prodigal Sunz (A capella gospel), among others.

New this year is a Praise Dance and Movement showcase. Also, the Fatherhood Collaborative, a group of Social Services agencies, will be among the exhibitors. In addition, G. Robert Smith, a 96 year old resi-

dent of Columbia Township and World War II Veteran who received a U.S. Congressional Medal of Honor in January 2014, is expected to make an appearance.

Cincinnati Juneteenth 2014 culminates on Sunday June 15<sup>th</sup> when the park turns into a sanctuary featuring a Father's Day concert with musical inspiration provided by several area church choirs and the Gospel Workshop in addition to liturgical dancers, soloists, and more.

Throughout the weekend, festival vendors will offer a wide variety of food, clothing, art, folk crafts, ethnic literature, etc, for purchase.

"We have the best." Lydia Morgan, Cincinnati Juneteenth Chair/Coordinator shares in an interview with AboutGreaterCincinnati.com. "It [Cincinnati Juneteenth] is exciting." Morgan has been with the Festival from inception.

FREE and open to the public, the Cincinnati Juneteenth Festival, a premier event organized by the all volunteer non-profit Cincinnati Juneteenth, is possible only because of the commitment and generosity of businesses, organizations, and friends as well as volunteer time and energy.

Generously supported by many sponsors and donors, the 2014 presenting sponsor is MetroPCS. While the 7 member organizing committee serves as the heart of the Festival planning, over 200 youth and adult volunteers – it's not too late to sign up to volunteer – help bring the event to fruition.

Said a Festival attendee, "Juneteenth is one of the best things that happens in this city."

Visit [www.juneteenthcincinnati.org](http://www.juneteenthcincinnati.org) to learn more about the Cincinnati Juneteenth Festival including how you can volunteer. You can also find Cincinnati Juneteenth on Facebook.

### *Of Note...*

*Juneteenth celebrates the significance of June 19, 1865 as the end of slavery in America. Although President Abe Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863 declaring all enslaved people free, it wasn't until June 19, 1865 when Union soldiers enforced the Emancipation Proclamation in the state of Texas, the last state in rebellion, and freed all remaining slaves in Galveston, Texas, that slavery ended. In 2014, Congress hopes to pass legislation to make June 19<sup>th</sup> Juneteenth Independence Day, a National Day of Observance in America like Patriot Day and Flag Day.*

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