



Juneteenth Celebrations Unite Frankfort Community

Josephine Sculpture Park (JSP) and Focus on Race Relations of Frankfort have been working alongside several community organizations to produce two events to commemorate Juneteenth in central Kentucky. This holiday, which celebrates the freedom of African Americans from slavery, has a complicated history which is explored through these programs.



JSP commissioned Kentucky artist Keith McGill to present the origins and meaning of Juneteenth with students through readings and dialogue. As McGill shares in this program, the history of the celebration is intertwined with many different dates and names, from 1863 to today. This program, *What is Juneteenth?*, produced by [Frankfort Plant Board Cable 10](#), will be broadcast on local cable and [JSP's Facebook page](#) premiering on Saturday, June 19th, at 2pm.

Also on June 19th, the **Frankfort Juneteenth** program will be held at Frankfort's Grand Theatre, starting at 7pm. Be uplifted by poetry, prayer, conversation and song shared by key members of Frankfort's educational, spiritual, and cultural organizations as they engage in dialogue about the concept of freedom in Frankfort's past, present, and future. Presenters include the Frankfort Independent School Board, First Corinthian Church, Together Frankfort, For the



People Coalition, and the Frankfort City Commission, among others. Seating is limited for this free event due to COVID-19 safety regulations. Please call the Grand box office at 502-352-7469 to reserve tickets. This program will also be livestreamed on the [Grand Theatre's Facebook page](#).

“Being a part of the Frankfort community and part of these Juneteenth events is at the heart of JSP’s mission to connect people to each other through the arts. We’re very grateful to everyone who made these events possible,” shared Melanie VanHouten, JSP’s founding director. JSP staff and board are committed to racial justice, and are proud to feature several sculptures and programs created by African American and Black artists, including Chakaia Booker, who was recently featured in the [New York Times](#).

Bringing Frankfort’s community together - not only on June 19th, but each and every day - is made possible by all of the program’s organizing partners. These local volunteer and non-profit organizations offer a variety of activities, events, and advocacy along with membership and philanthropic opportunities for racial social justice.

- [Focus on Race Relations](#) is a grassroots initiative formed in the aftermath of the 2017 racial violence in Charlottesville, Virginia. They hope to inspire other local community members and organizations to join their efforts and engage in open, honest, face to face dialogue about race and race related issues. To learn more or become a member, visit focusonracerelements.org.
- [Together Frankfort](#) also formed in 2017 as a non-partisan volunteer group to increase voter participation and education on public issues.
- [For the People Coalition](#), which held a March on Equality at the Old Capitol in Frankfort in early June, is a coalition of young, like-minded individuals dedicated to the peaceful pursuit of change in the community. FTPC spreads awareness on inequality, racism, justice, and progressiveness. “It all starts with us.”

Other partners supporting these events include the Beta Upsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. The Grand Theatre event is generously sponsored by Joe and Debbie Graviss.

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