

Juneteenth 2021 Statement

June 19th marks Juneteenth which commemorates the ending of slavery in the United States. On this date in 1865 Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas with the order stating that the war had ended and that slaves were now free. This order emancipated all Black Americans, including the 250,000 Black people in Texas who had remained enslaved for an additional two years after Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1863.

The General Order stated: "The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired laborer."

As we see everyday in myriad ways, these words, speaking to "absolute equality" for Black Americans have not come to fruition due to the continued injustice and systemic racism impacting all facets of American life. In the first year of the Anti-Racism Task Force, we have focused on bringing

awareness to this truth. As we enter our second year as a task force we plan to continue speaking out about this while working to bring about transformative and meaningful change through joining with the community to advocate for rights and freedoms that have been systematically and structurally denied. We recognize that these can be uncomfortable truths to face and conversations to have. For lasting change to occur, however, we must step out of our comfort zones and use the expertise and power we have as psychologists to educate, foster dialogue and identify and commit to the work that will move our community closer to the ideals of anti-racism.

Juneteenth is a celebration of a critical moment in the history of our country, and it invites us to reflect on how to continue moving forward with the aspirations it celebrates. As you reflect on this day, please take a look at the resources below and consider participating in the [Buffalo Juneteenth celebrations](#) (many of which are being held virtually this year).

[Buffalo Juneteenth | Buffalo: African American Heritage](#)

[Juneteenth World Wide Celebration](#)

[What Is Juneteenth? - HISTORY](#)

[18 Books To Read Leading Up To Juneteenth](#)

[Biden to Sign Law Making Juneteenth a National Holiday - NYTimes](#)

[Newsweek article highlighting argument that making Juneteenth a national holiday is not enough](#)

[A Juneteenth of Joy and Resistance - NYTimes](#)

[How to Celebrate Juneteenth](#)

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The Anti-Racism Task Force of the Psychological Association of Western New York (PAWNY): Nita Makhija (Co-Chair), Jane Dewey (Co-Chair), Tanisha Joshi, Amber Dewey, Alanna Lipinski, Karen Klementowski, Tacianna Indovina, Thomas Chacko, Meredith Beck-Joslyn

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