

Juneteenth Celebration

Freedom! Juneteenth embodies the belief written in the Constitution that "...all men are created. equal." When the Emancipation Proclamation was signed in 1863, word didn't reach the enslaved of Galveston Texas until June 19, 1865, when Union forces freed the enslaved people of the area. Enlisted in the union forces were segregated all Black-units, known as the Buffalo Soldiers. A nickname given to them by the Native Americans for their fierce fighting spirit and hair texture similar to the Buffalo of the Great Plains. Juneteenth cements the idea that we are not free until we are all free, such a holiday calls for celebration, and what better place to celebrate than the Buffalo Soldier National Museum.

The museum kicked off the week with a Juneteenth themed version of M.A.D (Museum After Dark,) a very popular monthly networking event at the museum. People enjoyed Texas barbecue, signature cocktails, board games, and music, as they learned about the museum and the current exhibits that they were welcomed to tour. "I've been coming to M.A.D for a few months now, each time has been better than the last," said one visitor.

Next, on the eve of Juneteenth the Buffalo Soldier Museum put together a festival to remember. Visitors were treated to live action performances of Harriet Tubman and Wayne the Buffalo Soldier! BSNM guest, Patricia, was moved to tears after watching the Harriet Tubman performance, "it's so deep...it hurts because I feel that some of our young people are ashamed of our history. What they don't understand is what we forget, we're doomed to repeat." Her husband, Ike, added, "when you read, you often miss the intimacy of the information being taught...the demonstration really drives the point home." We are proud of our current exhibit Herstory. This exhibit highlights the contributions and achievements of women in the armed forces. "Herstory" not only includes stories of women in the past like Cathay Williams, but also contains stories of present female heroes like Vanessa Guillen and Jasmin Moghbeli. While trekking through the museum it's more than likely you happened upon our archivist, Jason, who was so kind to take some of the Museum artifacts and put it on display so that visitors could interact and gain a deeper understanding of the history behind said artifacts. Finally we had a room dedicated to the history of Juneteenth and how it came to be a holiday to put the cherry on top. Of course our Juneteenth wasn't all about education, there were drinks, food, games, and a live mural painting. Some of the visitors, when asked, wanted to give their opinion on Juneteenth and the museum, "In my home state of Kentucky we celebrate August 8th, because that was the emancipation date of our area so Juneteenth is new to us," stated Ruby Tolliver. "It's nice to see the nation and museum celebrate Juneteenth as a holiday and get the recognition it deserves."

Juneteenth is a holiday just as, if not more important than armistice day, flag day, or even independence day. The meaning Juneteenth to enslaved peoples and their descendants trumps any gift on Christmas, any bouquet of roses on Valentine's day, and any turkey on Thanksgiving. Entities such as the Buffalo Soldier National Museum do an amazing job reminding us that

Juneteenth is not just an excuse to drink or dance like any other holiday, but that it is a remembrance of the struggle and bravery of the souls that came before us to accomplish the freedoms that we enjoy to this day.