



PENNMUSEUM

NEWSRELEASE

Forum Philly and Penn Museum host Juneteenth: A Celebration of Freedom on June 15

PHILADELPHIA, April 19, 2024—In advance of the official holiday, the **Penn Museum**, in collaboration with **Forum Philly**, will host an inaugural **Juneteenth Festival** on **Saturday, June 15, 2024** from 10:00 am–4:00 pm. **Admission is free for everyone.** The all-day family-friendly celebration will commemorate the importance of June 19, 1865, the day that marks the official emancipation of enslaved people in Texas.

The **Juneteenth Festival** will open access to the Penn Museum's galleries, exhibitions, and outdoor spaces. One of its historic gardens, Stoner Courtyard, will offer a central hub for learning, celebration, and community building.

This all-day program includes:

- Performances from the **West Powelton Steppers and Drum Squad**, the **Black Boys Makin' Noise** storytelling group, and line dancing with **Kenny J**. Visitors are encouraged to bring a blanket or portable chairs to sit in the garden and enjoy the outdoor performances.
- **#ForTheCulture Community Conversations** and pop-up exhibit featuring Black diaspora artifacts hosted by **Monica O. Montgomery**.
- All-ages workshops such as African drumming led by **Karen Smith** and quilt-making with **Carla Wiley**.

- “Daily Dig” pop-up talks available every hour in the galleries offer endless insight into an artifact in 15 minutes.
- Educational and fun activities for everyone, such as Adinkra symbol art-making, plus an opportunity to touch replica artifacts through “Cartifact” stations.
- Inspirational storytelling sessions with **Auntie Jo Jo** .
- Event host **Starfire** and **DJ Aura** curate a high-energy celebration of community.
- A community marketplace spotlighting **Black-owned businesses** and organizations that are focused on health and wellness.
- Food trucks with sweet and savory fare for purchase plus, the Penn Museum Café is open from 10:00 am-3:00 pm. Visitors are welcome to dine outdoors in one of the Museum’s gardens.

Concluding the celebration is Forum Philly’s Juneteenth Honors Program, which will be held from 2:00–4:00 pm in Harrison Auditorium. The program will **illuminate the contributions of K-12 students and educators from across the region who have participated in Juneteenth-related programming and projects, such as essays, visual arts, dance, and poetry.**

“The collected observance and appreciation of Juneteenth as an important American witness for justice and needed progress reminds us all that good can happen when we persevere for equality, freedom, and liberty guaranteed to all Americans in the U.S. Constitution,” says Dr. Malcolm T. Byrd, Founding President of Forum Philly and a member of the Penn Museum’s Community Advisory Group, which advocates for community-informed partnerships like this one. “Likewise, our 2024 Juneteenth Schools Initiative approach empowers K-12 students to be primary contributors to the content and framing of historically rich civic education that better informs peers and the broader school community.”

The 2024 Juneteenth Schools Initiative (24JSI) reaches thousands of students in more than 30 schools across the region. The Honors Program will recognize Forum Philly’s partners: school districts across Philadelphia, William Penn, Chester Upland, and Southeast Delaware County, as well as Charter and religious schools and local organizations.

Together, they built peer-created and historically accurate educational initiatives around Juneteenth to bring this important day to the lives of their schoolmates as a part of the school districts' ongoing curriculum. Juneteenth-centered classroom instruction and learning assemblies will take place in public, charter, and faith-based K-12 schools in the final weeks of the academic year. These lessons were designed by the students themselves and supervised by faculty members.

The 24JSI is co-sponsored by Quion Advisors, Penn Museum, Acqua Penna, and the Philadelphia Foundation, along with support from donors, including Seer Interactive, Inc.

Dr. Tia Jackson-Truitt, Chief Diversity Officer at the Penn Museum, says the daylong event builds on the success of last year's private Juneteenth Honors program held in collaboration with Forum Philly.

"In consultation with our Penn Museum Community Advisory Group, we sought to co-create an event that is accessible, educational, and impactful. By partnering with several local organizations and performers, our goal is to highlight community resources, showcase the immense talent in our local neighborhoods, and create a culturally enriching environment at the Penn Museum that people want to return to, time and time again," Dr. Jackson-Truitt says. "It is an honor to welcome back returning visitors and introduce new community members to the vast array of history and stories within these walls."

Advance registration is required to receive free tickets to attend the event. [**Register here.**](#)

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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ABOUT FORUM PHILLY

Established in 2019, the Philadelphia Forum for Faith, Law, and Civics (Forum Philly) promotes the spiritual wellness, economic viability, civic interests, social stability, and political equity of African- Americans through its work under the leadership of its Founding President and Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Malcolm T. Byrd. For more information, visit www.forumphilly.org or follow @forum.philly on Instagram.

ABOUT THE PENN MUSEUM

The Penn Museum's mission is to be a center for inquiry and the ongoing exploration of humanity for our University of Pennsylvania, regional, national, and global communities, following ethical standards and practices. Through conducting research, stewarding collections, creating learning opportunities, sharing stories, and creating experiences that expand access to archaeology and anthropology, the Museum builds empathy and connections across diverse cultures.

The Penn Museum is open Tuesday-Sunday, 10:00 am-5:00 pm. It is open late the first Wednesday of each month from 5:00-8:00 pm. The Café is open Tuesday-Thursday, 9:00 am-3:00 pm and Friday and Saturday, 10:00 am-3:00 pm. For information, visit www.penn.museum, call 215.898.4000, or follow @PennMuseum on social media.