



# Proclamation

## JUNETEENTH FREEDOM DAY

**WHEREAS**, June 19<sup>th</sup> is declared as Juneteenth Freedom Day, a nationally recognized day which celebrates the rich culture, legacy and heritage of Black and African American people;

**WHEREAS**, 2023 marks the 158<sup>th</sup> year of Juneteenth Freedom Day with Juneteenth being the oldest known celebration commemorating the abolition of slavery in the United States, dating back to June 19, 1865 when Union soldiers led by Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas with news that the war had ended, freeing the enslaved; and

**WHEREAS**, this was two and a half years after President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation which became official on January 1, 1863; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Congress—between 1865 and 1870—would pass key amendments to the U.S. Constitution, that upon ratification by each state, would profoundly change the legal status of those once enslaved. The thirteenth amendment abolished bonded servitude, the fourteenth amendment conferred citizenship upon those once enslaved, and, finally, the fifteenth amendment enfranchised men once held in bondage; and

**WHEREAS**, today, Juneteenth Freedom Day celebrates Black and African American people's freedom and achievement, while encouraging continuous self-development and respect for all cultures, as it takes on a more national, symbolic, and even global perspective; and

**WHEREAS**, annual Juneteenth celebrations are held throughout the Bay Area—in cities such as San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, and as close as East Palo Alto, where a Juneteenth Food & Music Festival will take place on Saturday, June 17, 2023 at Bell Street Park; and

**WHEREAS**, East Palo Alto is also home to Live in Peace, a non-profit organization centered around empowering at-risk youth and young adults to reclaim the vision for their future, which serves the East Palo Alto and Palo Alto communities; and

**WHEREAS**, as part of their mission, Live in Peace “shows that deep community roots and a family-style approach can support young people facing economic insecurity and unequal access to opportunity;” and

**WHEREAS**, Palo Alto, largely inspired by local non-profits such as Live in Peace, continues the journey of addressing racial inequities and focusing on efforts to increase diversity, inclusion, and belonging as expressed in the City of Palo Alto's Equity Mission Statement.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Lydia Kou, Mayor of the City of Palo Alto on behalf of the entire City Council, do hereby recognize and celebrate June 19<sup>th</sup> as Juneteenth Freedom Day, and call upon our community to reaffirm our commitment to eradicating hate, racism, and inequity and continuing the work of equity, justice, and hope.

PRESENTED: June 19, 2023

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**Lydia Kou**  
**Mayor**