

NEPTUNE TOWNSHIP CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH AND JUNETEENTH

BLACK HISTORY IS AMERICAN HISTORY!

Black History Month

In 2003 a group of community volunteers spearheaded a planning committee to provide an annual celebration of Black History Month for Neptune Township. Its purpose is to educate the community about the experiences, contributions, and achievements of African Americans, expanding knowledge of this part of American history. The Planning Committee, with support from the Township, works in collaboration with the Neptune School District, and local businesses, community leaders and organizations to present an informative and engaging free event for the community. The program varies each year and includes speakers, poetry, art, music, skits, and dance, with a particular focus on participation of students in grades K-12. Neptune citizens and organizations are recognized for their accomplishments and contributions; and in recent years a student media contest has been held to provide students the opportunity to voice their perspectives on the annual Black History Month theme.

Black History Week celebrations began in 1926 as part of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History to educate the national public about the contributions of African Americans to U.S. history. The celebration was expanded to a month-long celebration in 1970. Each year the now named Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) selects a theme that focuses on a specific aspect of Black history and culture. <https://asalh.org/> The Neptune Black History Planning Committee uses the ASALH annual theme for guidance in developing a theme for Neptune's celebration.

Juneteenth

In 2021 the Neptune Black History Committee began organizing an annual celebration of Juneteenth to educate the community about the federal and state holiday that recognizes this important historical date in U.S. history. Music, games, crafts, dancing, speakers, refreshments, prizes, parades, and a flag raising, are featured as well as a resource fair providing information on health, education, housing, nutrition, safety, and voting. This event is supported by Neptune Township, the Neptune School District, and local businesses, organizations, community leaders, elected officials, and resource agencies.

In 2020, the NJ Legislature designated the third Friday of June, as a State and public holiday, known as Juneteenth Day. Juneteenth National Independence Day (also known as Jubilee Day, Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, and Black Independence Day) became a federal holiday in 2021. The date commemorates June 19, 1865, when enslaved people in Galveston, Texas, were informed 2 ½ years later about the Emancipation Proclamation. President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation Jan.1, 1863 freeing enslaved people living in Confederate States. The passage of the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution on December 6, 1885, finally freed all enslaved people in all the States, ending nearly 250 years of slavery in the United States

More information about the Neptune Township Black History Month and Juneteenth celebrations is available in the Neptune Public Library Archives and at <https://www.facebook.com/neptunelblackhistory>

Neptune Township Black History Celebrations

1st Annual Black History Celebration - 2004

A Celebration of African Americans in U.S. History - Jersey Shore Arts Center – Feb. 28, 2004

2nd Annual Black History Celebration - 2005

“A Journey through Midtown” - The Early Childhood Center – Feb. 26, 2005

3rd Annual Black History Celebration - 2006

Neptune Middle School – Feb. 25, 2006

4th Annual Black History Celebration - 2007

“African American Contributions in Praise and Worship” - Neptune Middle School – Feb. 27, 2007

5th Annual Black History Celebration - 2008

Youth Summit- “A Positive Focus on the Future of Our Youth” - Neptune High School – Feb. 23, 2008

6th Annual Black History Celebration - 2009

Gala Reception & Art Exhibit - Neptune High School – Feb. 6, 2009

A President’s Civil War Night - Summerfield School – Feb. 13, 2009

A Civil Rights History & Movie Night - Midtown Community Elementary School – Feb. 20, 2009

Family & Youth Summit - Neptune High School – Feb. 28, 2009

7th Annual Black History Celebration - 2010

Healthcare & Contributions of African Americans – Feb. 6, 2010

Family Health and Fitness Day - Feb. 20, 2010

8th Annual Black History Celebration - 2011

Honoring Our Legacy: Red/ Black Connections/African Native Americans

Intertribal Powwow

Midtown Community Elementary School – Feb. 26, 2011

9th Annual Black History Celebration - 2012

African Caribbean Carnival - Neptune High School – Feb. 18, 2012

10th Annual Black History Celebration - 2013

10th Anniversary, ENCORE! “From the Past to the Future” – Neptune High School - Feb. 23, 2013

11th Annual Black History Celebration - 2014

Honoring Our Trailblazers & Humanitarians - Feb. 22, 2014

12th Annual Black History Celebration - 2015

Closing the Generation Gap, “The Bridge”, A play presented by Kenneth Craddox

Neptune High School - Feb. 28, 2015

13th Annual Black History Celebration - 2016

Rise of the Queen, “Sistah, Sistah, Oh My Sista”-A Play by Carmen Davis

Neptune High School, Feb. 27, 2016

14th Annual Black History Celebration - 2017

Before We Were Slaves - Unity Community African Dance & Drum Ensemble

Neptune High School - Feb. 11, 2017

15th Annual Black History Celebration - 2018

“Just Sayin’ - It’s All about Stories, Poetry, Rap, Songs, Music & Dance”

Neptune High School - Feb. 17, 2018

16th Annual Black History Celebration - 2019

Black Migrations – Neptune High School - Feb. 16, 2019

17th Annual Black History Celebration - 2020

Speaking Truth-African Americans in Journalism - Neptune High School, Feb. 15, 2020

18th Annual Black History Celebration - 2021

Celebrating Our African Roots: The History of Soul Food – Feb. 26, 2021- Virtual Event

19th Annual Black History Celebration - 2022

Black Health & Wellness

History, Health, Sanity in the Midst of COVID19, Feb. 19, 2022 – Virtual Event

20th Annual Black History Celebration - 2023

Good Trouble - Black Resistance in Neptune & the Shore Area

Neptune High School - Feb. 25, 2023

21st Annual Black History Celebration - 2024

Celebrating Two Decades of Neptune Black History Events!

& Recognizing 50 Years of Hip-Hop

Neptune High School - Feb. 24, 2024

22nd Annual Black History Celebration - 2025

Black American Business - Neptune High School - Feb. 22, 2025

23rd Annual Black History Celebration - 2026

Expressions of Black Freedom - Neptune High School - Feb. 14, 2026