

Foundation for Tacoma Students Board and Executive Director Make Juneteenth Holiday Policy: Effective June 19, 2021

Background of Juneteenth

On June 19, 1865, the announcement was made that tens of thousands of African-Americans in Texas had been emancipated, closing the door on one of the last chapters of slavery in the U.S.

Juneteenth traces its origins back to Galveston, Texas where on June 19, 1865, Union soldiers, led by Major Gen. Gordon Granger landed in the city with news that the Civil War had ended and slaves were now free. The announcement came two-and-a-half years after [President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation](#) of Jan. 1, 1863 that freed slaves in Confederate states. However, since that proclamation was made during the Civil War, it was ignored by Confederate states and it was not until the end of the war that the Executive Order was enforced in the South.

Granger delivered the news himself, [reading General Order Number 3](#):

"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 free laborer."

The day's name is a combination of "June" and "nineteenth" in honor of the date of Granger's announcement and first appeared around 1903. It is also known as African American Freedom Day or Emancipation Day.

By [Leada Gore | lgore@al.com](#)

Foundation for Tacoma Students Commitment to Racial Equity and Anti-Racism

In November 2019, the Foundation for Tacoma Students' (FFTS) executive director presented to its staff and board proposed commitments to operationalize equity in the workplace. Five equity commitments¹ were discussed, vetted, and adopted, and sparked new life in how FFTS should demonstrate its policies, practices, and behaviors in being an anti-racist organization.²

Achieving racial equity is a tactic and falls within the tenets of undoing racism. An honest acknowledgement of what racism is, how it is defined and addressed, and what role our organization takes to stand up and against racist acts are embedded in each equity commitment FFTS has adopted. Our equity commitments require ongoing evaluation and action in order to ensure that meaningful accountability is achieved. Therefore, a *Call for Board Resolution* to acknowledge Juneteenth as an organizational holiday is requested.

¹ Focus on populations furthest from meaningful opportunities; disrupt and dismantle structural and institutional racism and systems that result in oppression; align and direct resources to populations under-resourced; represent the community FFTS services in all levels of employment; redress past system and institutional practices by partnering and contracting with women-owned and minority-owned business.

² Significant progress was accelerated in the wake of the racial reckoning America faced with the public murder of George Floyd and local resident, Manual Ellis.



**FOUNDATION FOR
TACOMA STUDENTS**

Foundation for Tacoma Students Adopts Juneteenth as Holiday

WHEREAS, the Foundation for Tacoma Students seeks to build and strengthen the Graduate Tacoma community movement to help every child achieve success.

WHEREAS, the values set by the Foundation for Tacoma Students include equity, accountability, boldness and courage, innovation, transparency, collaboration, inclusion, and optimism.

WHEREAS, the Foundation for Tacoma Students is committed to operationalizing racial equity in its work by acting on five explicit commitments to realizing a Tacoma where every child succeeds in school, career, and life.

WHEREAS, disrupting and dismantling structural and institutional racism and systems that result in oppression or the oppression of freedom of one’s right to be seen and heard for what they bring to the organization.

WHEREAS, accountability and transparency requires bold and courageous leadership.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Foundation for Tacoma Students will acknowledge beginning June 19, 2021, and every June 19 moving forward the 1865 announcement that the end of slavery in America and the freedom of African Americans or Blacks in the United States was final. The Foundation for Tacoma Students will observe this day each year as a paid holiday as part of our commitment to anti-racism, racial and social justice, encouraging a day of reflection, recognition, acknowledgment, and healing.

ADOPTED on this date: 1/15/2021

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Holly Bamford Hunt
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Board President (Holly Bamford Hunt)

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Stuart Young
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Board Vice President (Stuart Young)

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Grant Hosford
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Board Secretary (Grant Hosford)

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Cassandra Mitchell
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Board Treasurer (Cassandra Mitchell)

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Joshua Knudson
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Board At-Large (Joshua Knudson)

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Board At-Large (Dr. Ivan Harrell)

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Executive Director (Dr. Tafona Ervin)