



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Honoring our Heritage: Forging the Future

The Greater Danbury NAACP, WCSU Racial Justice Coalition and More

Proudly Present Danbury Juneteenth -- National Independence Day -- Celebration 2022

Danbury, CT (April 25, 2022) – Juneteenth will be celebrated in the city of Danbury on **Sunday, June 19th** from **12-5PM** at **Western Connecticut State University (WCSU), Midtown Campus** on 181 White Street and will lift up the theme that garnered the most votes by Danbury residents* -- ***"Honoring our Heritage: Forging the Future"***.

Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the abolition of slavery in the United States. Dating back to 1865, it was on June 19th that the Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston, Texas with news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free. This was two and a half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation - which had become official January 1, 1863.

Fast-forward to 2021, in a great example of bi-partisanship the United States Senate voted unanimously on a resolution to make Juneteenth an American federal holiday. The Senate resolution officially establishes June 19th as "*Juneteenth National Independence Day*." The day after the Senate passed the resolution, the United States House of Representatives also approved the resolution and President Biden signed the bill into law.

"Juneteenth almost always focused on education and self-improvement, with a range of activities provided to entertain the masses, many of which continue in tradition today," says Glenda Armstrong, President, Greater Danbury NAACP. In an effort to recognize and celebrate the rich history of this holiday and to highlight the extraordinary contributions made by African Americans to the community, the Danbury Juneteenth Coalition is planning a fun-filled day for the entire family – both young and old -- with a curated roster of exciting activities that will take place throughout the day.*

Rahsaan Langley, one of Connecticut's premier R&B singers, will be the musical headliner. There will be live entertainment by **D.J. Frank Stewart** and other music and dance performances by local artists, such as hip hop artist **D.J. Gaines**, with more being added. Also, **Cultural & Historical Activities** including a **Juneteenth Exhibit and Walking Tour** by the **Danbury Museum**, **"Liberation" Juneteenth Visual Arts Celebration** sponsored by the **Cultural Alliance of Western CT** and **Panel Discussion** featuring leaders from the fields of education, the arts, the non-profit sector, corporate and community leaders. Adjacent to the main area will be a **Wellness Center** providing FREE COVID-19 vaccinations and health screenings, **Kids Corner** with children's activities, **local vendors** and **informational resources**, e.g., employment opportunities, a variety of **food truck options** and so much more! Because Juneteenth falls on Father's Day this year, the celebration will also honor fathers with swag bags and other tokens of appreciation.

"The Racial Justice Coalition is actively committed to ensuring racial justice and inclusiveness at Western Connecticut State University and the community at large," proclaimed Ree LeBlanc Gunter, Co-Chairperson, WCSU Racial Justice Coalition. *"Therefore, we are thrilled to not only be a premier sponsor but to also host this year's Danbury Juneteenth Celebration on our campus,"* added Carina Bandhauer, Co-Chairperson.

Admission is FREE and open to the public. Pre-registration at <https://www.wcsu.edu/tickets/> is preferred, but not a requirement. For those interested in volunteering, becoming a vendor or corporate sponsor, please contact the Danbury Juneteenth Coalition at DanburyJune19@gmail.com or on Facebook @DanburyJuneteenth.

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* Source: Danbury Juneteenth Survey Monkey results – January 2022

About the Danbury Juneteenth Coalition:

The Danbury Juneteenth Coalition is a collaborative of several Danbury-based agencies, community organizations and residents dedicated to making the Danbury Juneteenth Celebration an annual spectacular community affair. The coalition was formed in 2021 and meets monthly to plan, fundraise and execute the program, beginning in October through to the culmination of the celebration on June 19th. The inaugural body consists of The Cultural Alliance of Western Connecticut, The Danbury Museum, The Greater Danbury N.A.A.C.P., WCSU Racial Justice Coalition, Salt & Light Ministries, Thank You and You're Welcome, LLC and several individual volunteers including Michelle James, Wesley A. Johnson II, Dr. Kelly Mero, April Y. Mills, Patrick Ridenhour, Michael Smith and Stephanie West. All are welcome to join.

About the Greater Danbury NAACP

The mission of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination. The Greater Danbury Branch is committed to combat injustices in our community so that everyone can better benefit from the richness of America. This is not work that we seek but it is work that is ongoing in the struggle for equality. We realize that the fight for civil rights and justice is a journey that has continued for over 100 years after the founding of our organization. The fight then and now continues with thousands of volunteer hours by our members.

About WCSU Racial Justice Coalition

The Western Connecticut State University Racial Justice Coalition (RJC) is a diverse, independent coalition of administrative and teaching faculty, staff, and students committed to promoting racial justice on campus. The RJC is actively committed to ensuring racial justice and inclusiveness, so that our campus community will be known as a safe and welcoming space for People of Color, where no form of racism is acceptable or tolerated.

About The Cultural Alliance of Western CT

The Cultural Alliance of Western Connecticut, a 501C-3 nonprofit and based in Danbury, Connecticut is a leader in supporting a vibrant arts and culture community in Northern Fairfield and Southern Litchfield Counties. We promote, educate, and advocate for arts, history, and culture as a primary driver of the economy and as an enriching influence for communities and people. We understand that the arts sector is a critical engine for growth through creativity, innovation and collaboration.