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Grace Hollowell:

What's up College Station? I'm Grace Hollowell, and today I'm joined by Cheletia Johnson, the supervisor over at our Lincoln Recreation Center. Hi, Cheletia.

Cheletia Johnson:

Hi. How are you doing?

Grace Hollowell:

I'm doing well.

Cheletia Johnson:

Good.

Grace Hollowell:

It's been a minute since we've had you on the show.

Cheletia Johnson:

Yes. It has been a while.

Grace Hollowell:

But you guys have been busy.

Cheletia Johnson:

Yes.

Grace Hollowell:

As always.

Cheletia Johnson:

Yes.

Grace Hollowell:

And we're here today to talk about the exciting events coming up for Juneteenth.

Cheletia Johnson:

Yes.

Grace Hollowell:

Let's talk a bit about why we celebrate this holiday and why it's important.

Cheletia Johnson:

Right. Juneteenth, June 19th, 1865 is when General Granger came to Galveston, Texas to let the slaves know two years later that they were free. And so African Americans in Texas celebrated that date as their Independence Day. And now that it's a national holiday, I think it's important for everybody to celebrate

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the significance of freedom. And so that's the reason why we've been celebrating it all this time. But it's about freedom for everyone.

Grace Hollowell:

Yes. Yes. And we have that special tie with it happening in Texas.

Cheletia Johnson:

Yes, that's correct.

Grace Hollowell:

And at the Lincoln Center, we have two events in honor of Juneteenth this year.

Cheletia Johnson:

Yes. Yes.

Grace Hollowell:

The Freedom Walk and the documentary night.

Cheletia Johnson:

Yes. The Freedom Walk, this will be our 20th year to do it in collaboration with the George Bush Library to where we will do the 2.2 mile walk from the Lincoln Recreation Center to the George Bush Library. And we will do that on June 18th at nine o'clock AM. And so we will start lining up probably about 8:30 AM at the W.A. Tarrow Pavilion. This 2.2 mile walk is something that we have been doing for the last 20 years. [inaudible 00:02:07] we have a little overcast, it's not too hot, but it's a great time to celebrate and it's for all ages. Only thing that we do ask people and our guest is not to bring their pets to walk with us.

Grace Hollowell:

It's important to remember.

Cheletia Johnson:

Yes. And so once we arrive at the George Bush Library, Mrs. Tony Simmons will be doing storytelling. And the theme this year is Sounds of Freedom. And so the storytelling will be full of entertainment, music, and dancing for all ages.

Grace Hollowell:

Yes. A big celebration of fun.

Cheletia Johnson:

Yes. A lot of fun. And so after that, all of the participants, after the storytelling, the kids will receive pizza and drinks. And so it's a great time for us and especially this 20 year collaboration with the George Bush Library. So we are super excited about that.

Grace Hollowell:

Yes, it's a big celebration. 20 years is, I'm sure it feels like it's flown by.

Cheletia Johnson:

Yes, it has. It has. And later on that day is going to be a busy day, more busy than normal at the Lincoln Center. That evening starting at 6:30 PM we will have our Jubilee to where we will continue to celebrate still with the same theme of Sounds of Freedom to where we will share the second part of the documentary of the Blacks in College Station. And this is in collaboration with the City of College Stations Historical Preservation Committee. Also, that evening we will be celebrating through songs dance and just having a good time celebrating Juneteenth, celebrating freedom. We will have free refreshments. We will be giving sausage wraps and hot dogs while they're last. And it's a tradition to serve watermelon for Juneteenth, but we do not want watermelon juice on our gym floor. And so we pass out watermelon Now and Laters. And so everybody will still get the flavor of watermelon, so. Yes.

Grace Hollowell:

Yes. Watermelon flavor without the mess.

Cheletia Johnson:

Exactly. Exactly. And so while supplies last, we will be serving sausage wraps and hot dogs to all of our guests, as well as we will have some local vendors there serving their products. And so I'm excited about them coming out again this year. But we just plan on having a good time celebrating the significance of freedom, our emancipation, our unity, being able to just serve how we can and be free to serve how we want to serve. So I'm excited about this 2024 Juneteenth celebration.

Grace Hollowell:

Yes. It's a fun way to learn more about it if you don't know much about Juneteenth.

Cheletia Johnson:

Yeah.

Grace Hollowell:

And even if you do, come out and celebrate.

Cheletia Johnson:

Exactly.

Grace Hollowell:

Where can people find out more information about these events?

Cheletia Johnson:

They can go to the City of College Station website and go to our Parks and Recreation department and go to Lincoln Center, and you will be able to find that information. But also for the community to know, there's other Juneteenth celebrations going on. On the June 19th, the actual day, the Larry Ringer Library is hosting activities. And so hopefully the community will go out and support their event as well. And just around the Brazos Valley, there's a lot of Juneteenth activities, so for people to get involved because that is our Independence Day as well.

Grace Hollowell:

Yes, it is a big celebration.

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Cheletia Johnson:

Yes, it is.

Grace Hallowell:

And there's multiple opportunities for you to get involved.

Cheletia Johnson:

That's correct.

Grace Hallowell:

And there's always something going on at the Lincoln Center.

Cheletia Johnson:

Yes, it is.

Grace Hallowell:

You guys are very, very busy.

Cheletia Johnson:

Right. Right.

Grace Hallowell:

So if people want to stop in, they can stop in and talk to you all. You guys are very helpful to provide information on things going on.

Cheletia Johnson:

Right.

Grace Hallowell:

Or check out our parks guide.

Cheletia Johnson:

Yes, definitely check out the parks guide. It is available online, or you can stop at any one of the recreation centers. And we have hard copies of what's taking place this summer in our parks department.

Grace Hallowell:

Yes. Well, thank you so much for being here today.

Cheletia Johnson:

Yes, thank you. All right.

Grace Hallowell:

And that's what's up.