

**eliminating racism  
empowering women**

**ywca**

**Greater Newburyport**

**YWCA Greater  
Newburyport**

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June 14, 2022

I hope you will be able to join me and other YWCA of Newburyport representatives at Newburyport's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Alliance's Celebration of Juneteenth. The event will be held on Friday, June 17 at noon at Newburyport City Hall.

Although Juneteenth became an official Federal holiday, we have come to the conclusion that not everyone understands the history of the date and what it means to all of us. The date was selected to celebrate the last day of slavery in the United States. And while that alone is worth celebrating, at least from my perspective, it seemed to be a celebration for African Americans ... and not necessarily for me.

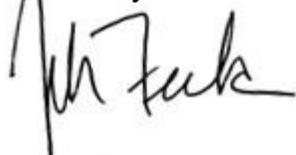
However, at a recent DEI Alliance meeting, I learned that this holiday goes beyond the last day of slavery. Rather, it should be celebrated as the first day the United States embraced the ideals embedded in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

June 19, 1865 was the origin of the United States seeking to achieve those ideals. It took 89 years to achieve that first step, far too long for those who suffered under the bonds of slavery. Women's Suffrage, the Civil Rights Act, and Gay Marriage represent additional steps taken toward these ideals. Yet, it is now 2022 and in no way can we claim that in our country, every person is treated equally. In fact, once again we are seeing the country reverse freedoms that we have battled for and won.

Despite the imperfect world we live in today, it is worth celebrating the victories that bring us closer to life where every person is treated equally. It is important that we have started this journey and that we continue to celebrate victories won along the way...especially that first victory.

Please come join me at City Hall on Friday, June 17<sup>th</sup> at noon.

Sincerely,



John Feehan  
Executive Director