

Juneteenth Festival honors emancipation

By Tasha Pope
Sentinel-Voice

The sixth annual Juneteenth Festival will be held Saturday, June 17, at the Sammy Davis Jr. Plaza located on the western end of the grounds at Lorenzi Park, 3333 W. Washington Ave at

Twin Lakes Drive. The festival will begin at 4:00 p.m. and end at 9:00 p.m.

The event is free, open to the public, and all ages are permitted to attend. There will be guest speakers, live entertainment, cultural and educational activities, story

tellers and a section with informational and merchant booths, said the head of the Las Vegas Juneteenth Committee, Diane Pollard. She also serves as director of marketing for Rainbow Medical Centers, the founding co-sponsor of the event.

The annual festival fundraiser will benefit Rainbow Dreams Academy, a charter elementary school set to open in 2007, according to Pollard who explained that the school "will focus on helping at-risk students."

It will also support the Kit Carson Elementary after-school and summer youth programs, she said. Both of these programs are supported by the Anthony L. Pollard Foundation, which is a charitable organization that raises money to improve the lives of community youth by providing educational assistance and opportunities. The enter-

tainment for the festival will include a performance by local bands, local rappers and a "big name" artist, yet unnamed.

"Once people hear about the act coming, they will be overwhelmed," Pollard suggested.

"Last year about 3,000 people attended. This year we expect around 4,000. Our long-term goal is to make it as big as Cinco de Mayo and other cultural celebrations like that," Pollard said.

In addition to the entertainment, a variety of food and drinks will be on sale. Pollard said there will also be

artifacts and other hand made items can't be found anywhere else.

Pollard feels events like the Juneteenth celebration are necessary.

"I think it helps communication and [allows] people to embrace different [cultures]," Pollard said.

Juneteenth started as a celebration among African-Americans living and working in Galveston, Texas, following the news that they were emancipated from slavery. June 19, 1865, is the day on which Major General Gordon Granger and his

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Walk

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efforts to provide information for Black Women on prevention, treatment, and support for those who have been diagnosed with Breast Cancer. They also provide support to get free mammograms, Pap smears, and a referral to a physician if someone is found positive.

An addition to the work of the local chapter is its attempt to reach out to female students in the middle schools of Clark County. They have launched initiatives to educate and inform these individuals early in life about being responsible for their health as it relates to breast cancer and how to take precautionary measures to guard against any potential dangers before contracting this disease.

Recent studies have shown that African-American women contract breast cancer at an earlier age than do most other women, so it is important to educate our young women about this deadly disease.

This effort will also help these young women to encourage their mothers and grandmothers to get a yearly breast exam, Pap smear, and mammogram.

Jeannie Beatty, president of the Las Vegas chapter of Sisters Network Inc., is a 16-year breast cancer survivor. She spoke about the fundraising efforts, the work of the organization and what it means for African-American women.

Beatty said, "This is our fourth annual fundraising walk this year, and the walk is an attempt to make the community aware of breast cancer [and the prevention, treatment

and support] for African-American women. Our organization is nationwide, and we recently opened a new [international] chapter in the [United Kingdom]."

"It was wonderful today to have the support of the Las Vegas Fire Department and the students from West Prep because they brought some energy to the march along with bringing people out of their houses to the fences and the street to see what was going on," she added.

"We hope that many of the people observing the march this year will join us next year. We passed out literature about breast cancer to make a difference in the lives of African-American women. This is a silent and deadly disease."

Beatty also indicated that the survival rate for members of the organization locally and nationwide is improving because of the education that they are able to provide to women at meetings and forums along with the advantage of receiving breast exams, mammograms, and medical treatments early on. However, she also said that more African-American women are dying—not from the onset of the disease, but from the lack of proper medical treatment of the disease. So, they encourage African-American women concerned about or suffering from this disease to contact the organization.

The organization hosts a monthly meeting on the third Friday of the month at Victory Missionary Baptist church, located at 500 West Monroe, at 7:00 p.m. For more information, call 648-3410.

Housing

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group will have to make sure that the subsequent homebuyer can qualify via the guidelines. Also, there is no restriction on the homebuyer making more money and improving their financial status once they have initially qualified for the subsidized loan.

Reverend Emanuel Wasson III, Pastor of Holy Trinity AME, and president of the development, spoke of the significance of this development. He said, "I am very happy for the turnout today from the various municipalities, banks and the general community to help us celebrate this wonderful occasion. We've come this far not only from hard work but by faith, and we know that if we continue to hold on and move forward that we will make a positive dent in this community. We believe that if we are to serve the community that we must lead by example."

North Las Vegas Mayor Michael Montandon was the guest speaker at the house-

warming ceremony. In his comments, Montandon stated:

"As I look at this project, I have a great appreciation for the project team and its success. As we look across the street, we have not been as successful as you have been. You see all these homebuilders across the city building homes and making a profit, but this group is about building homes and making a difference. That is a truly righteous business. I am grateful that the city has been able to provide some assistance to that effort."

Each of the houses built consists of 1,400 square feet with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, garage, living room/dinette, kitchen, closets, refrigerator, washer, dryer, stove, dishwasher, and backyard. Joseph Sayles, of Tech Start, has also furnished each house with a computer set-up to have access to the Internet and the future technological society.

Three of the new homeowners briefly spoke

about becoming first-time purchasers. Monique Johnson commented, "I feel that I am very blessed, especially with the high rising costs of housing. I didn't think that I would be able to afford a house and the Lord blessed me, and gave me a home that I could afford so that I can start a future for my son and myself and be stable."

Lorenzo Hammond indicated, "I'm a proud owner of my home. I'm absolutely blessed. I've been here for about six months now and I'm truly glad to live in a nice community."

Armando Lopez said, "I've waited for this house for years, and I am happy to finally own one for my family and myself." The next phase of Westlake Estates to be built by Holy Trinity's development corporation will consist of ten additional houses and include a four-bedroom plan. For more information on this project, you can contact Reverend Wasson at (702) 877-0790.