Tomorrow marks the first celebration of the end of slavery, now a federal Holiday, June 19th. In recognition of Juneteenth, the Village of Rhinebeck unanimously passed a resolution recognizing June 19, 1865, as a day of African American freedom. With hope and optimism, we can acknowledge our history as a day we can celebrate and move forward together.

Thank you to CultureConnect for the attached press release and the Rhinebeck Central School District for also acknowledging this day of freedom.

**Rhinebeck To Celebrate Juneteenth Over the June 19-20 Weekend**

Rhinebeck and CultureConnect Team Up to Promote Awareness of Juneteenth Holiday; Student Juneteenth Artwork to be Displayed at Town Hall.

RHINEBECK, NY—The Village and Town of Rhinebeck have joined with local nonprofit organization CultureConnect to celebrate Juneteenth, which is now an official New York State holiday. Juneteenth celebrates the emancipation of enslaved people in America and is traditionally observed on the anniversary date of the June 19, 1865 announcement in Galveston, Texas by Union Army General Gordon Granger proclaiming freedom from slavery. The local commemoration will take place over the weekend of June 19-20.

Billed as “a day for Rhinebeck to commemorate, celebrate, and educate,” the local Juneteenth observance will feature artistic displays and informational materials throughout the downtown. On display outside Town Hall is the centerpiece of this initiative: a Juneteenth banner created by the seventh graders of Rhinebeck’s Bulkeley Middle School. This original piece of art was commissioned by CultureConnect in collaboration with the Rhinebeck Central School District and is part of an effort to incorporate Juneteenth into the K-12 curriculum, familiarize students with its significance to the African-American community, and place the holiday within the larger context of American history.

The local community is also helping to promote awareness of Juneteenth. Businesses in the Village of Rhinebeck, as well as the Starr and Morton Public Libraries, will feature posters, informational brochures, postcards, flags, and additional artwork by local students. Private homes throughout the Town and Village of Rhinebeck will also display Juneteenth lawn signs, which were provided free of charge by CultureConnect.

At its June 8 meeting, the Rhinebeck Village Board adopted a resolution in support of the local Juneteenth observance. According to Village Board member Vanessa Bertozzi, “Rhinebeck is a welcoming and inclusive community, and we are delighted to support this initiative. Rhinebeck has a rich and storied history associated with the African- American community, and Juneteenth gives us the opportunity to honor some of those stories, such as the talented Black artisans who flourished in the Oak Street neighborhood.”

Added Sarah “Rosie” Rosenthal, chair of the CultureConnect board, “It’s been a privilege to work with the Village and Town of Rhinebeck and members of the local African- American community to raise the visibility of this joyous American holiday celebrating freedom. CultureConnect’s plan is to make Juneteenth an annual event in Rhinebeck, and we have some exciting ideas about how to make it an even bigger celebration next year.”

About CultureConnect

CultureConnect, a Rhinebeck-based nonprofit organization, helps empower youth and families to create a future of social justice, global engagement, and cultural competence. Working with local school districts and with the support of college, high school, and community volunteers, CultureConnect runs after-school and summer programs for school-age youth. It also offers anti-racism programming in support of its goal of creating a community that is inclusive and welcoming to all. Additional information about Juneteenth and CultureConnect’s work in the community can be found at: <https://www.cultureconnectrbk.org/>