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MEDIA CONTACT:

Jaa St. Julien, St. Julien Creative Group
713-965-7084 | 713-481-2671 | jaa@stjuliencg.com

Parade kicks off the Juneteenth holiday Second Annual Houston Juneteenth Multicultural Health Festival opens at the end of the parade

The 35th annual Juneteenth Freedom Parade will wind its way through downtown Houston streets June 21, kicking off a day of family-centered activities associated with the Second Annual Houston Juneteenth Multicultural Health Festival presented by UnitedHealth Group.

The National Emancipation Association sponsors the parade. More than 3,000 people will participate in the parade including marching bands, trail riders, floats and military units.

“Juneteenth is about freedom. We are tying in the military with the parade because the fight for freedom continues,” said parade coordinator Kenneth Austin. “ We are working together with the festival to express the importance of our health and our liberties.”

The parade will start at 10 a.m. and is scheduled to last until noon. After the parade crowds are expected to flow into Discovery Green Park to finish the day at the Second Annual Houston Juneteenth Multicultural Health Festival. The festival operates from noon to 6 p.m.

Austin said the Juneteenth parade is Houston’s longest running African American parade.

The theme for the Houston Juneteenth Multicultural Health Festival is “Remembering Our Past for a Healthier Future.”

Juneteenth is the common Texas phrase for June 19, 1865; the day when Union General Gordon Granger issued General Order #3 in Galveston, Texas setting free all remain African American slaves held in Texas. State Rep. Al Edwards, D-Houston, is considered the father of the Juneteenth holiday.

A complete event schedule and media downloads associated with the second Annual Houston Juneteenth Multicultural Health Festival presented by UnitedHealth Group can be found at www.houstonhealthfestival.org.