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Photo by Eric Bauer

2nd annual Juneteenth Fest set for June 19 at H-F High

BY **QUINTON R. ARTHUR**
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You Matter 2 is gearing up for its 2022 Juneteenth festival on June 19 at Homewood-Flossmoor High School.

The Juneteenth Festival is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. at Homewood-Flossmoor High School's South Building parking lot. The festival will open with a 10 a.m. parade starting at Parker Junior High School.

You Matter 2 says the Homewood-Flossmoor Juneteenth Festival is a celebration of African American culture expressed through food, music, dance and arts. The event is providing an environment that celebrates and showcases the uniqueness, power, and endurance of African Americans.

Like last year's inaugural festival, the event will be family friendly and feature live music and performances. There will be vendors and food trucks from local Black-owned food companies and vendors.

"Our team has been working very hard to put this together for the second year in a row," said Destiny Watson, founder of You Matter 2.

To prepare for the festival, You Matter 2 hosted its 2nd Annual Fundraising Gala on May 5. The organization raised over \$13,000 surpassing its goal of \$10,000. Funds will go towards expanding and launching new programming, hiring summer youth workers and supporting this year's Juneteenth Festival.

"We're just making sure that we are continuing to just grow the festival and put on an experience for the community that they will not only enjoy, but also feel that they are learning more about Juneteenth," Watson said.

This year, there will be six participants in the 2022 Mr. and Miss Homewood-Flossmoor Juneteenth Royal Court Contest. Participants were selected based on a fundraising voting system and displays of excellence in academic and personal achievements, and service to the community.

"The royal court is a different piece that we are really excited for. We'll be able to engage more of the youth in the community on Juneteenth. They bring a different perspective to Juneteenth," Watson said.

There are four courts: Mini Mr. and Miss, representing Kindergarten through 2nd grade; Little Mr. and Miss, representing 3rd through 5th grade; Junior Mr. and Miss, representing 6th through 8th grade;

HOMWOOD-FLOSSMOOR
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FESTIVAL
by **YOU MATTER 2**

and Mr. and Miss representing 9th through 12th grade. This year's court members are:

- Mini Miss Homewood-Flossmoor, Parker Duncan
- Little Mr., Homewood-Flossmoor, Evan Roberson
- Little Miss Homewood-Flossmoor, Phallon Davis
- Junior Miss Homewood-Flossmoor, De'Aunta Burns
- Junior Mr. Homewood-Flossmoor, Joshua Thomas
- Miss Homewood-Flossmoor, LaNiya Whitlock

This year's sponsors include Blue-Cross BlueShield of Illinois and The Wayfarer Foundation. Launched in 2021, the mission of The Wayfarer Foundation is to advance humankind spiritually towards a future peaceful world civilization.

The partners for the event are the Village of Flossmoor, the Village of Homewood, Homewood-Flossmoor High School, and K. Carlton, Inc.

School supplies will be collected the day of the festival for You Matter 2's Back To School bash in late July. Also, since Juneteenth is the same day as Father's Day, You Matter 2 plans to do a raffle for Father's Day gift baskets.

The admission will be free with an option to purchase an activity pass for \$20, and a pass that includes axe throwing for \$35.

Registration and opportunities to be a sponsor, vendor or volunteer for You Matter 2's Homewood-Flossmoor Juneteenth Festival can be found at www.youmatter2.org/juneteenth.