

# ABIPA – ASHEVILLE BUNCOMBE INSTITUTE OF PARITY ACHIEVEMENT

## The Intersection of Juneteenth and Father's Day

By *JéWana Grier-McEachin, Executive Director*

*An opportunity for reflection and celebration.*

At a recent community meeting, I asked those gathered what was most important about this month. The answer that rang through the room the loudest surprised me: "Juneteenth!" Needless to say, the one person who said "Father's Day!" was quickly drowned out.

Father's Day and Juneteenth share no direct historical or legal connection—one is a fixed-date historical anniversary, the other a floating-date cultural observance. Yet when their dates align, as they do on June 19, many communities treat the overlap as an opportunity for deep cultural reflection and celebration.

### Juneteenth (June 19)

Juneteenth commemorates the day in 1865 when Union troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, to inform enslaved Black Americans that the Civil War had ended and they were finally free—more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation.

Often called America's second Independence Day, Juneteenth symbolizes liberation, resilience, and the ongoing struggle toward full equality.

### Father's Day (3rd Sunday in June)

Father's Day was established to honor fatherhood, paternal bonds, and the influence of fathers in society.

The first recognized Father's Day in the United States took place on June 19, 1910, in Spokane, Washington, honoring a Civil War veteran and single father.

Few people know that the creation of Father's Day grew out of personal grief, wartime gratitude, and the success of Mother's Day.

In 1908, Grace Golden Clayton organized a service in Fairmont, West Virginia, to honor 361 men—most of them fathers—who died in the Monongah mining disaster.

It was a one-time church event and did not immediately become an annual tradition.

Washington State celebrated the nation's first statewide Father's Day on



*JéWana Grier-McEachin.* Photo: Red Angle Photography

June 19, 1910, championed by Sonora Smart Dodd of Spokane. She was raised by a widowed Civil War veteran, William Jackson Smart, who brought up six children alone.

The road to national recognition was long:

In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson supported the idea but did not issue a proclamation.

In 1924, President Calvin Coolidge encouraged states to adopt the holiday to "establish more intimate relations between fathers and their children."

In 1966—60 years ago this year—President Lyndon B. Johnson issued the first presidential proclamation establishing the third Sunday in June as Father's Day.

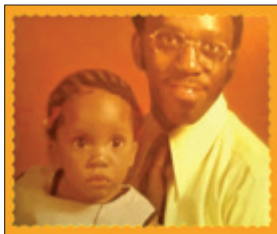
In 1972, President Richard Nixon signed it into law as a permanent national holiday.

### When Juneteenth and Father's Day Intersect

The last time the two holidays fell on the same date was June 19, 2022; the next time will be June 19, 2033.

When they do overlap, the celebrations often take on a deeper meaning. Many communities use the moment to honor the resilience of Black fatherhood. During slavery, Black men were legally denied the right to marry or parent their children. Celebrating Black fathers on a weekend dedicated to freedom highlights the triumph of family preservation, legacy, and the nurturing of future generations.

This year, Juneteenth falls on the Friday before Father's Day. I encourage you to weave the two together intentionally as you honor the fathers in your life.



As always, I want to offer my traditional shout-out to my father, the late John W. Grier, who continues to inspire my commitment to lifting up Dedicated Dads.



Celebrating 22 Years of Being the Community Health Connection for Asheville and Beyond

### Help Us Celebrate Our Birthday by Gifting ABIPA a Donation of \$22

Tax-deductible donations can be made by sending a check to ABIPA, PO Box 448, Asheville, NC 28802, or donate online at [www.abipa.org](http://www.abipa.org). Thank you for your support!

## Our Strive Not To Drive Bus Rides

*To ride or not to ride—that is the question.*

On May 18 and June 1, ABIPA partnered with AARP Mountain Region to support Asheville's Strive Not To Drive initiative.

The first outing was planned for 10 participants riding the S1 from Shiloh to Daddy Mac's for lunch and back. But interest grew so quickly that the ride expanded into a two-day opportunity. Participants shared memories of riding the bus when they were young, along with stories about both the original and current stops in the Shiloh community.

One participant noted that she wouldn't mind riding the bus more often, but the travel time made it difficult to get places promptly. Another pointed out that riding could be a smart economic choice given today's high gas prices—especially since seniors can purchase a monthly pass for just \$10.

We also learned that most buses can accommodate two wheelchairs. However, we experienced firsthand how challenging it can be for wheelchair users due to street and sidewalk conditions. At one stop, the bus ramp couldn't be used because the stop was located on a narrow grassy strip. Broken sidewalks and uneven asphalt made pushing the wheelchair difficult and, at times, unsafe.



Participants gathered at Daddy Mac's for lunch to discuss the bus ride.

Even so, the rides created a valuable space for conversation and for hearing directly from seniors who ride—or might consider riding—the bus.

Overwhelmingly, participants said they enjoyed the experience and would like to schedule future group rides, whether to visit downtown, attend events, or simply gather together.

Participants would like to extend a heartfelt "Thank You!" to Rebecca Chaplain, Mountain Region Director of AARP, and Devin Quinlin, Transit Planning and Projects Coordinator, for making this opportunity possible.

We encourage readers to take part in the Comprehensive Operational Analysis to Improve Transit in Asheville. The survey introduces the Draft Network and invites you to share your thoughts. Your feedback will help shape final adjustments before the plan goes to City Council later this year.

This third round of public engagement, open through June 28, 2026, will show how public input has been incorporated and ask, "What did we miss?" You can participate by going online to [publicinput.com/s26451](http://publicinput.com/s26451).

### Upcoming Event

#### Free Sunday Shop

This month our Free Sunday Shop will take place on Father's Day, June 21 from 3-6 p.m. at the Friendship Center, 142 Shiloh Road. The first 50 dads will receive a special gift!

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ABIPA promotes economic, social, and healthy parity achievement for African Americans and other underserved populations in Buncombe County through advocacy, education, research, and community partnerships.

