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June, 2022

Happy Pride and Juneteenth!



Dear Friends,

The past few years have been difficult and unprecedented, to say the least. Not only have we all been affected by the ongoing pandemic, but we have also been witnessing and experiencing what feels like a rise in hatred and racism, especially anti-Asian and anti-Black racism. Just two years ago, we were grieving the deeply racialized and tragic killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and

George Floyd. And just weeks ago, we mourned the loss of lives incurred by the anti-Black mass shooting in Buffalo, and several mass shootings since.

I think of June as a time of so much celebration – the start of summer, Pride Month, and Juneteenth. And this June, we are experiencing the difficult truth that hope and celebration often exist side-by-side with deep pain and grief. In fact, I think Juneteenth is an embodiment of this duality. Juneteenth is the juxtaposition of pain and grief with hope and celebration. As President Barack Obama said regarding Juneteenth, “It’s a celebration of progress. It’s an affirmation that despite the most painful parts of our history, change is possible – and there is still so much work to do.”



We can't forget this, and we can't forget to celebrate our hard work and achievements along our path of change and transformation. In June, the Port's Employee Resource Groups of Port-wide Pride and Blacks in Government organized the Port's celebrations of Pride and Juneteenth, respectively. For the first time in two years, the Seattle Pride Parade was held in-person and a group of Port staff marched in the parade on Sunday, June 26th. BIG organized an in-person Juneteenth event for Port employees, featuring a marketplace with local Black vendors and guest speakers. Additionally, Port employees reflected on the significance of [Pride](#) and [Juneteenth](#) on the Port's blog.

These efforts bring me hope. I am hopeful that we, as a community, can honor and build upon the immeasurable sacrifice and contributions of those who came before us while recognizing that we all benefit from the eradication of social injustice. We have the opportunity and privilege to shape our organization and our country into one that is guided by our deepest values. It is up to all of us to build a better community, region, and nation.

Happy summer, happy Pride, and happy Juneteenth!

In Unity,

Bookda Gheisar
Senior Director, Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion



The Port of Seattle investment of \$450,000 allowed Highline Public Schools, Washington Department of Natural Resources and Forterra to secure an additional \$300,000 for tree canopy enhancement projects. [View the urban canopy video.](#)



The Port of Seattle and Seattle Public Schools donated 13 Diamondback bikes originally used to patrol Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA) to the Rainier Beach High School Bike Works program. [View the bicycle donation video.](#)

Centering Equity and Taking Action

South King County Environmental Symposium



As part of the Port's [South King County Community Impact Fund Environmental Grant Program](#), the Port held a community symposium on June 18, creating a space for community groups to share success stories and best practices for organizing and improving the environment in South King County. The panel discussion topics included: cultivation and cultural belonging; community stewardship and youth activism; and green jobs. The next funding cycle for this program will launch in [September](#).

Port of Seattle Police Chief Finalists



To center community and make the hiring process more collaborative and transparent, community members, Port tenants, and customers attended a virtual public forum on June 27 to meet the finalists for the Port of Seattle Chief of Police. Questions from the public were gathered before the event and presented to the candidates. A recording of the forum will be made available on the [police chief search page](#), and we hope to announce our new Police Chief soon!

Initial Port Investment Leads to Increased Tree Canopy Near Schools and Powerful Community Partnerships



A [Port of Seattle investment of \\$450,000](#) allowed Highline Public Schools, Washington Department of Natural Resources, and Forterra to secure an additional \$300,000 for tree canopy enhancement projects. This funding enabled the program to increase canopy on or within one quarter mile of select public schools in SeaTac, Burien, and Des Moines.

Forterra developed a student-based engagement model and trained students to lead and engage peers and community members in urban forestry. So far, this project has engaged dozens of community volunteers, planted more than 500 native plants, and, through a partnership with a local foodbank, increased access to healthy produce by creating and expanding garden beds to grow food.

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