



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Greater Indianapolis NAACP Issues Statement Regarding Children's Museum Juneteenth Celebration

INDIANAPOLIS — June 14, 2022 — Chrystal Ratcliffe, president of the Greater Indianapolis NAACP, issued the following statement today regarding the Children's Museum of Indianapolis and its Juneteenth celebration:

"As news of Indianapolis Children's Museum Juneteenth watermelon display captured the attention of the community, we at the NAACP view this as a teachable moment. In particular, we feel this moment allows us to learn the importance of context and perception in an organization's message.

"As we understand it, the caterer -- a person of color -- sought to embrace Juneteenth and how this event was honored within their own family. However, in trying to make the point, they missed the historic context of how watermelon [has been used in racist ways to demean African-American people](#). In reality, the watermelon is a natural fruit for human beings, dating back more than 5,000 years to the Kalahari Desert in South Africa. Watermelon seeds and paintings have been discovered in Egyptian tombs more than 4,000 years old. The racist watermelon stereotype was perpetuated by white supremacists and black-face minstrel shows in the Jim Crow era, which portrayed Black people as overly fond of watermelon in ways that made them appear ignorant, simple-minded and lazy. While the caterer may have tried to convey a message of togetherness while enjoying a nutritious, healthy fruit, they miscalculated how the item would be perceived by the community within the museum's Juneteenth celebration.

"We look forward to working with the Indianapolis Children's Museum to increase awareness of the holiday and continue to share the traditions that bring us as a community closer together."

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**About NAACP:** The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is the nation's oldest, largest and most widely recognized civil rights organization. Our mission is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights for all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination.