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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **TRACY AFRICAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION GRANTS 2017 ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS TO SEVEN TRACY AREA STUDENTS**

*Scholars to be Recognized at 2017 Juneteenth Celebration | Sat., June 3rd*

*"From Our Roots Come Greatness"*

**TRACY, CA:** Tracy African American Association, LLC. (TAAA) announced today the names of seven Tracy-area high school students to whom it will award its 2017 **Wayne Nelson Academic Scholarship** grants for their respective academic achievements and community contributions. Annually, TAAA provides scholarships—named for late TAAA member and education advocate Wayne Nelson—to enrich educational opportunities for college-bound African American students who are graduating from Tracy, CA high schools. Scholarships are awarded to high school seniors who apply, meet specific academic and social requirements, and who will enter an accredited college or university on a full-time basis. With the help of generous sponsors and donors, this year's awards will bring TAAA's scholarship grants total to nearly \$122,000.

### **2017 WAYNE NELSON ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**

*Morgan Brown*, Merrill F. West High School  
*Zaria Ealy*, Merrill F. West High School  
*Milan Jackson*, Tracy High School  
*Korynn Pope*, Tracy High School  
*Mary Testaldet*, John C. Kimball High School  
*Emmanuel Turner*, Merrill F. West High School  
*Anastasia C. Veal*, Merrill F. West High School

Scholarship certificates will be presented to students during TAAA's 23rd annual Juneteenth celebration, to be held from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Saturday, June 3rd at Tracy's Lincoln Park, located at East Street and North Eaton Avenue.

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When speaking about the importance of higher education, TAAA Education Chairperson Dr. Howard Baker Jr. said, "I am greatly impressed with this year's applicants, their respective accomplishments and their stated career paths. I can't stress enough to students the importance of early planning for higher learning—beginning in middle school—so they can begin to take classes in preparation for high school and college."

The Juneteenth Festival is themed "From Our Roots Come Greatness" in recognition of 23 years that Tracy African American Association has served its community. The event is admission-free; and everyone is invited to join in the day-long celebration, a fun event for the entire family. Varied genre performers will volunteer their artistic talents for everyone's live entertainment enjoyment. Carlon Jackson looks forward to joining 2017 Juneteenth chairperson Yolande Knight to perform emcee duties. Cozeen Edwards will DJ recorded music while Tyner Sound Productions engineers audio. Peter Barrett, a 20+ year TAAA member, who passed on March 14th, will be honored with a special recognition segment which will feature a poem, "Phenomenal Man," by TAAA president Dr. Clara Styles. Throughout the day Sutter Tracy Community Hospital medical personnel will provide free health screenings.

The second half of the day's activities will feature young vocalists, dancers and spoken word artists presented by BigMikeRob Entertainment Management. The event will provide a delicious variety of foods, exhibitors, arts & craft vendors, kid's corner and more. Attendees will enjoy visiting with friends and neighbors, dancing and winning raffle prizes, many provided by event vendors and exhibitors. [\*Juneteenth celebration promo\*](#)

TAAA is grateful to its 2017 Juneteenth Festival corporate sponsors including Jackson Rancheria, Imara Realty, McDonald's, Surland Companies, Sutter Gould Medical Foundation/Sutter Tracy Community Hospital, Tracy Delta Solid Waste Management, Inc., and Wilson & Kratzer, along with numerous generous community donors and supporters.

#### **ABOUT JUNETEENTH:**

Juneteenth observes that on June 19, 1865 slaves in Galveston, Texas learned the Civil War had ended and they were now free. (Note: This announcement came two and a half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which had become official Jan. 1, 1863). Upon hearing the news, the slaves celebrated in jubilation with song, dance and food. Since that time, slave descendents throughout the United States have carried on the celebratory tradition.

In the year in which TAAA excitedly observes its 23rd consecutive year hosting, sponsoring and contributing to programs that benefit young people and its community, the organization will once again observe and celebrate learning of the end of slavery by hosting its 23rd annual Juneteenth Festival.

#### **ABOUT TRACY AFRICAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION, LLC:**

The Tracy African American Association (TAAA) is a non-profit organization established in 1994 by a group of concerned professionals seeking to form ties among African Americans and other members of the Tracy Community. Its mission is to unite people of all ages and backgrounds through sponsorships and contributions to educational, cultural and social programs that foster awareness, diversity, and a cooperative environment that unite the Tracy Community. Membership is open to individuals who share and embrace the TAAA mission. [www.TAAA.net](http://www.TAAA.net)