

## Chicago celebrates Juneteenth with Mos Def and more at IMAN's 'Takin' It to the Streets' concert

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Chicagoans looking for something to do to celebrate Juneteenth were in for a treat with the Inner-City Muslim Action Network's (IMAN) "[Takin' It to the Streets](#)" free concert from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Marquette Park, located at 6734 S. Kedzie, had approximately 20,000 people; 200 vendors; 100 artists, including [hip-hop](#) guru [Mos Def](#) headlining the concert; four stages worth of entertainment; health summits; a prayer area; family-friendly games and rides all in one day.

IMAN had a little something for everybody. Those who were interested in physical fitness could participate in yoga, family karate, Debke dancing, a three-on-three basketball tournament at the sports arena, or ride the merry-go-round and ferris wheel.

The creative participants enjoyed graffiti art, getting henna tattoos, shopping for paintings and books at vendor stands, and parents could let their children get face paintings. Also, the Family Fun Zone included kids' games, clown impersonations and a drums workshop.

Those interested in faith-based events attended seminars on environment-friendly living and discussing food deserts; racial strife; liquor store visibility and low-income communities at the "[Healin the Hood](#)" speaking event, in addition to finding out more about IMAN, activism through faith and celebrating 150 community ambassadors from the OneChicago, One Nation initiative.

Some participants got first-hand accounts of experiences with race and religion in the middle of performances.

"I was driving down the street and these guys in the car next to me yelled 'Hey Osama' and 'Hey Ghandi,'" said one host, Azhar Usman, standing on the Unity Stage. "Since when do those two go together? I'm going to fight you by not eating.' At least if you're going to be racist, don't be ignorant in your racism. That's like yelling 'Hey, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.' to someone. When did being called Ghandi become an insult?"

There was also a Juneteenth Tribute on the Unity Stage. 2010 marks the 145th anniversary celebrating the 1865 announcement in Galveston, Texas that slavery had ended. Although the Emancipation Proclamation was signed on January 1, 1863, Texans still continued to practice slavery. But after the news that General Robert E. Lee surrendered in April 1865, slaves were free to go.

In the midst of learning more about Juneteenth, race and culture at the "[Takin' It to the Streets](#)" concert, there was plenty of music entertainment, too. Music genres included [hip-hop](#), Indie Rock, Afro-Native soul, funk bands, Latin folk and soul, spoken word, Chicago footwork, [drum instrumentals](#), R&B and soul, [breaking](#) (also called [breakdancing](#)), Andalusin music from Morocco, Senegalese music, Latin Ska, reggae, Turkish Sufi Virtuoso, Qawwali Music from Pakistan, West African guitar instrumentals, Middle Eastern gypsy surf and Desert Blues from the Sahara.

Popular [neo-soul](#) group Kindred the Family Soul also came out to perform on the Streets Stage for smooth groove lovers.

But around 7 p.m., all stages were shut down in anticipation of Grammy-award winning artist, Mos Def, who is also well-known for playing Chuck Berry in "[Cadillac Records](#)," Viven Thomas from "[Something the Lord Made](#)," Chris Anton Vichon in "[Brown Sugar](#)" and the voice of Gangstalicious on "[The Boondocks](#)." When Mos Def whispered "Chicago" into the mic, thousands screamed cheered, clapped and whipped their heads around looking for the rapper.



Fans cheer and clap waiting on Mos Def to perform onstage.

Mos Def came onstage a little after 8 p.m., gave the audience an appreciative smile and said, "I won't take up too much of your time, but I have some songs to perform for you."

The peaceful crowd cheered and encouraged him to rap and sing as long as possible. After performing a few songs and grinning while he heard the crowd rhyming along with him, he ended the concert with thunderous applause.



*Additional Notes: Although the concert was free, participants were encouraged to donate \$10 (maximum of \$30 for individual texts) by texting 50555. To stop repeated texts asking to donate more than \$10, a text must be sent to "stop" additional texts. Messaging and data rates may apply. Participants could also donate \$5 at the registration table during the one-day concert.*

**For more info:**

**["Hip-hop pioneers and the history of rap music"](#)**

**["June is Black Music Month, Countdown of Shamontiel's Top 30 African-American artists \(Mos Def, June 15\)"](#)**

**["Juneteenth acknowledged as legal holiday in 32 states but does America really care?"](#)**

**[Juneteenth website](#)**

**["Rappers and singers celebrate brown-skinned women, skin complexion complexity"](#)**

**[Streets 2010 "Takin' It to the Streets" concert](#)**

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