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After speakers including event organizer Latonya Barnett (above), a nine-minute demonstration concluded Peaceful Plates of Platteville in Smith Park Sunday afternoon. Videos of the speeches can be seen on The Journal's Facebook page.

Black Platteville Community Network forms 'for people who seek liberation and unity'

by Steve Prestegard
editor@theplattevillejournal.com

The third in a series of protests took place in Smith Park in Platteville Sunday afternoon.

Another event is planned for City Park Friday to commemorate Juneteenth Day, the end of slavery in 1865.

The events were spurred by the deaths of three people who died while being arrested by police — Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick, Ga., Feb. 23, Breonna Taylor in Louisville March 13, and George Floyd in Minneapolis May 25.

The Black Platteville Community Network is "the brainchild of black women who yearned for community" formed "to collectively elevate diverse emerging black leaders," according to its news release.

"There has always been ongoing conversations scattered across

Platteville and surrounding communities about how to combat police misconduct/brutality, implicit bias, white supremacy, racism, and the operation of oppressive systems and structures that serve to marginalize non-white people," the statement said. "However, in the wake of nationwide civil unrest, coalitions among black people in the area are being forged in search of lasting change."

The network calls itself "simply a group of people who share aspirations: Support and realize new possibilities for Black full existence and liberation. Keeping with Afrocentric ideology, the group identified the need to elevate black voices as the drivers for change. This include network members who identify as part of Black Diaspora, person of color, bi-racial, parent/guardian/caretaker of black child(ren), Black affiliation/



association from Grant, Lafayette, Iowa, and Dubuque counties.

"This group is for people who seek liberation and unity. The network intentionally has decentraliz



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Juneteenth event Friday

► NETWORK from page 1

The first two events took place in City Park June 6 and 7. The June 7 event was led by Alvin Watts, a UW-Platteville sophomore.

"The creation of this coalition is seen as an opportunity to develop youth leadership, because the youth are unencumbered by feasibility, wildly creative and audacious," said the statement. "They are not cynical by any definition. They are hopeful, and future focused; as it is their future they are designing."

The group hosted Black Unscripted Grill & Chill in Smith Park Friday to "gather Black/POC [persons of color] community, enjoy fellowship, and share how things are going in 2020 to be elevated in strategy planning." That event was part of what is called the Black Joy Celebration Series, which includes Friday's Juneteenth event.

On Sunday, more than 100 people came to Smith Park for Peaceful Plates of Platteville, which combined food, speeches and a

nine-minute-long demonstration. Videos of speeches and the demonstration can be viewed at The Journal's Facebook page.

Tianna Irons, one of the protest organizers, is organizing a donation drive for Floyd's family. Irons can be contacted via Facebook message for both the Juneteenth schedule and details of the donation drive.

The group statement said that "Black Women, Queer, and youth across the world are leading ground level civil action. Platteville is no exception to this complex. Juneteenth Black women of Platteville have reminded the Black Community Platteville Network that they have all the tools needed to take care of our community through organizing and strategy. Black Women continue to answer the call of history. This paradigm shift is unique for Platteville and is sure not to miss."

Group information is available by following @BlkPlattCom in Facebook

of Platteville, which combined food, speeches and a

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mask and to practice social distancing during the event at the funeral home.

Caran Peterson and Tianna Irons



Black Unscripted Grill & Chill in Smith Park Friday was held to "gather Black/POC [persons of color] community, enjoy fellowship, and share how things are going in 2020 to be elevated in strategy planning." It was part of the Black Joy Celebration Series, the second event of which will be a Juneteenth celebration in City Park Friday.