



In one of its largest classes, The Emerson Family School graduated 23 students from its adult education program Thursday. **(Photo by Charlie Benton, SDN)**

Education association hosts community day

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An Oktibbeha County group hoping to resurrect a sentimental site held a celebration of its cause Saturday.

The Education Association of East Oktibbeha County School held a festival on the grounds of the former Moor High School to allow Moor High alumni to reconnect, and to spread awareness of the group's plan to transform the derelict school into a community center. The festivities also acknowledged Juneteenth, or June 19, 1865 - the day news of freedom reached slaves in Texas. Several church groups performed, and barbecue was available to all. The District Five Fire Department and

Oktibbeha County Sheriff's Office were also on hand with vehicles on display.

"Juneteenth kind of corresponds with what we're trying to do," said Josie Malone-Redmond, an event organizer and 1964 Moor High alumna. "It was the freeing of the slaves. Well, we are free, right? But there are a lot of us who don't realize education is also a part of that, and it's very important that we celebrate education."

Malone-Redmond said even with the campus not being used as a school, it could still be used to educate those in the vicinity, holding programs for youth and others in the community.

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Josie Malone-Redmond speaks at the Education Association of East Oktibbeha community day Saturday. The event featured church group performances, food and fellowship, and was used primarily as a means of advancing the association's cause of transforming the former Moor High School campus into a community center. **(Photo by Charlie Benton, SDN)**



The New Prairie Grove Missionary Baptist Church Liturgical Dance Team performs at the Education Association of East Oktibbeha community day on the grounds of the former Moor High School. At the foreground is Jolesia Barber, and behind her is Oliyah Calmes. **(Photo by Charlie Benton, SDN)**

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"We are in a community with a university," Malone-Redmond said. "There's no reason why our kids can't be the best-educated children in the state. We are at the back door of Mississippi State. We just want the community to know even though the school is closed, education can still take place."

Association President Jackie Ellis described some of the group's efforts towards the

community center, including discussions with Starkville-Oktibbeha Consolidated School District Superintendent Eddie Peasant and the Oktibbeha County Board of Supervisors. She said both had liked the idea.

"We're hosting this because we desire to make this a community center in the future," Ellis said. "Today is to give us an example of the kinds of activities we can have out here. Our primary focus is on community, educa-

tion, youth and of course, our heritage."

Ellis said she hoped the center could be a place for children to congregate and learn, and said the site could also be of use to churches and other organizations.

"Basically, we just want to have this as a place that the public can use," Ellis said. "We're just the advocates. This is our organization, and that's a part of what we do."

More information on the association and its mission can be found on its Facebook page.