

JUNETEENTH

Culture, fun mix in celebration



Dan Irving/The Holland Sentinel

Jahkiya Saunders, a musician for the group Roots Rock Society, demonstrates the use of a shakare, a traditional West African instrument, during the Juneteenth celebration Saturday in Kollen Park.

BY STEPHEN KLOOSTERMAN

stephen.kloosterman@hollandsentinel.com
(616) 546-4258

Juneteenth is a chance to learn about African-American culture and, at Kollen Park Saturday, a chance to celebrate freedom.

"It makes African-American history part of Holland's history," said event emcee Kristina Houston.

Juneteenth, a nationwide commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States, is based on an event in Texas on June 19, 1865. Almost two-and-a-half years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, an isolated band of slaves in Texas received word that they were free.

Wayne Coleman, chairman of the Juneteenth committee, said the event was good way to build relationships among different races.

"Because if we don't build relationships, we will never overcome race," he said.

The Chicago-based band Roots Rock Society headlined the event. Contemporary



Dan Irving/The Holland Sentinel

Contemporary Christian singer **Danielle Smith** performs during the Juneteenth celebration Saturday in Kollen Park.

Service award for their work in the Holland area. Bingo, basketball, barbecue ribs and balloon animals were on hand for families. Area non-profit and government agencies set up booths to inform attendees of their services.

"You don't have to be an African-American to do Juneteenth," said Larry Coleman, 46, of Holland.

Ron VanderSchaaf, 78, of Park Township, said he had been aware of Juneteenth for several years before coming