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## IPS/IEA 32nd Annual Multicultural Festival

By Shawnta S. Barnes – May 20, 2018



Multicultural fairs and events are critical to raise awareness and help with acceptance in our communities. School districts should be at the forefront of ensuring their students, families, and communities have opportunities to learn about different cultures and practices around the world especially when people from different countries reside in their communities.

Earlier this week in the MSD of Wayne Township, Lynhurst 7th & 8th Grade Center held its 6th Annual International Festival: It's a Small World After All. A few days later on Saturday, May 19 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Lafayette Square Mall, Indianapolis Public Schools in conjunction with the Indianapolis Education Association held its 32nd Annual Multicultural Festival. The theme was "Celebrating, Honoring, Embracing Cultural Diversity and Racial

Equity.” It was another opportunity for the Indianapolis community to be exposed to other cultures. My boys and I attended the festival at Lynhurst and they, along with my husband, attended yesterday’s festival with me. Between the two festivals, there was only one overlapping booth which shows the vast diversity we have in Indianapolis.

During the IPS/IEA Multicultural Festival, there was a performance stage where ethnic music was played, groups danced, and stories were told. Participants were also able to navigate around the festival and learn about different groups and multicultural organizations.

We picked up two great resources at the festival. The first resource was an African American Leaders activity book provided by the Center for Black Literature & Culture housed in Central Library. As a black parent, I know I have to take advantage of any opportunity to expose my children to successful people who look like them. The second resource was a book published by the Indiana Historical Society, *Indianapolis: a city of immigrants* by M. Teresa Baer. Just as it is important for my sons to learn about people who look like them, it is just as important for them to learn about people who don’t look like them and live in our city.

Children will lack empathy, compassion, and tolerance when adults don’t make the effort to teach them about people who are different from them. This is why cultural festivals, fairs, and events are important. I’m glad that IPS and Wayne Township exposed students, families, and the community to the wonderful diversity in our city.