

Celebrating Diversity ***At***



July 2021

A Message from the DEI Newsletter Committee

The past quarter has been very busy on the DEI front and we are very excited to inform you of all the activities that have taken place.

We hope you were able to attend the June 24th lunch and learn on “Having Hard Conversations about DEI.” It was a very interesting and informative session on a very sensitive subject. We have two more lunch and learns planned for the remainder of 2021. Watch for the SAVE THE DATE and registration emails.

Our “DEI Conversation Hour” program begins in July. An email will be coming out soon with the details and information on how to register.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the DEI Newsletter. Please remember that this is your newsletter and we would like to include items of interest and importance to you.

Please forward any ideas, recipes, news about events you may have held or suggestions you may have for future editions to deinewsletter@ahrc.org.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your support.

The DEI Newsletter Committee

Linda Rosen

Paula DeVita

Shaun Weathers

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The Month of July Marks...

July 11 - World Population Day



World Population Day is an annual event, observed on July 11 every year, which seeks to raise awareness of global population issues. The event was established by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme in 1989. It was inspired by the public interest in Five Billion Day on July 11, 1987, the approximate date on which the world's population reached five billion people. World Population Day aims to

increase people's awareness on various population issues such as the importance of family planning, gender equality, poverty, maternal health and human rights.

July 26 – National Disability Independence Day



National Disability Independence Day on July 26th commemorates the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 26th, 1990.

The Americans with Disabilities Act provides protection from employment discrimination as well as better access to goods, services, and communications for people with disabilities.

The day not only celebrates the anniversary of the ADA. It also serves several other purposes, too. First, the law first broke down barriers individuals with disabilities faced every day. It also became a timeline of change that developed. Over time, common barriers such as narrow doors and small bathroom stalls became wheelchair accessible buildings and bathrooms. Other examples include braille signs and crosswalks for the vision impaired improving mobility and safety.

Beyond structural changes, the act motivated designers to enhanced technology. Often, physical limitations restrict a person's ability to access legal or health information. New assistive technologies make it possible to obtain the necessary information.

July 30 – International Day of Friendship



The International Day of Friendship was proclaimed in 2011 by the UN General Assembly with the idea that friendship between peoples, countries, cultures and individuals can inspire peace efforts and build bridges between communities.

The resolution places particular emphasis on involving young people, as future leaders, in community activities that include different cultures and promote international understanding and respect for diversity.

To mark the International Day of Friendship the UN encourages governments, international organizations and civil society groups to hold events, activities and initiatives that contribute to the efforts of the international community towards promoting a dialogue among civilizations, solidarity, mutual understanding and reconciliation.

July 2021 Diversity Observance Calendar

July 1: Canada Day, or Fête du Canada, is a Canadian federal holiday that celebrates the 1867 enactment of the Constitution Act, which established the three former British colonies of Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick as a united nation called Canada.

July 4: Independence Day (also known as the Fourth of July), a United States federal holiday that celebrates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. The original 13 American colonies declared independence from Britain and established themselves as a new nation known as the United States of America.

July 8-9 (sundown to sundown): The Martyrdom of the Bab, a day when Bahá'ís observe the anniversary of the Báb's execution in Tabriz, Iran, in 1850. July 11: St. Benedict Day, the feast day of St. Benedict celebrated by some Christian denominations.

July 11: World Population Day, an observance established in 1989 by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme. The annual event is designed to raise awareness of global population issues.

July 14: International Non-Binary People's Day, aimed at raising awareness and organizing around the issues faced by non-binary people around the world while celebrating their contributions.

July 14: Bastille Day, a French federal holiday that commemorates the Storming of the Bastille, a fortress-prison in Paris that held political prisoners who had displeased the French nobility. The Storming of the Bastille, which took place on July 14, 1789, was regarded as a turning point of the French Revolution. Celebrations are held throughout France.

July 15: St. Vladimir of the Great Day, feast day for St. Vladimir celebrated by the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches.

July 17-18: Tisha B'Av, a fast in commemoration of the destruction of two holy and sacred temples of Judaism destroyed by the Babylonians (in 586 B.C.E) and Romans (in 70 C.E.). At the Tisha B'Av, after select passages from the Torah are read and understood, netilat yadayim, or the washing of the hands, is performed.

July 18-19 (sundown to sundown): Waqf al Arafa, the second day of pilgrimage within the Islamic faith.

July 18: Nelson Mandela International Day, launched on July 18, 2009, in recognition of Nelson Mandela's birthday via unanimous decision of the U.N. General Assembly. It was inspired by a call Nelson Mandela made a year earlier for the next generation to take on the burden of leadership in addressing the world's social injustices: "It is in your hands now." It is more than a celebration of Mandela's life and legacy; it is a global movement to honor his life's work and to change the world for the better.

July 19-20 (sundown to sundown): Eid al-Adha, an Islamic festival to commemorate the willingness of Ibrahim (also known as Abraham) to follow Allah's (God's) command to sacrifice his son, Ishmael. Muslims around the world observe this event.

July 23: The birthday of Haile Selassie I, the former Emperor of Ethiopia whom the Rastafarians consider to be their savior.

July 24: Asalha Puja, or Dharma Day, is a celebration of Buddha's first teachings.

July 24: Pioneer Day, observed by the The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to commemorate the arrival in 1847 of the first Latter-day Saint pioneers in Salt Lake Valley.

July 25: St. James the Greater Day, feast day for St. James the Greater celebrated by some Christian denominations.

July 26: Disability Independence Day, celebrating the anniversary of the 1990 signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

July 30: International Day of Friendship, proclaimed in 2011 by the U.N. General Assembly with the idea that friendship between peoples, countries, cultures and individuals can inspire peace efforts and build bridges between communities.

“HAVING HARD CONVERSATIONS ABOUT DEI ISSUES”

On June 24, the DEI Committee sponsored a Lunch and Learn on “Having Hard Conversations about DEI Issues.” Two staff members (Mary Simon and Chris Williams) discussed their experiences; Dr. Christine Schulte presented some tips and strategies; and HR Director Hassan Abdulhaqq spoke about racism in the workplace.

Following are some takeaways from the program:

STEREOTYPES + BIAS = DISCRIMINATION:

Prejudice is the preconceived judgment or opinion, typically based on limited information.

Stereotypes, omissions, and distortions all contribute to the development of prejudice.

Racial microaggressions is a term first coined in the 1970s by Chester Pierce to describe the daily slights and insults experienced by Black people.

The term ‘microaggressions’ has broadened to include all marginalized groups and microaggressions may be intentional or unintentional.

- Example: When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born
- Example: Statements that indicate that a White person does not see color
- Example: A person of color is assumed to be dangerous or a criminal

The cumulative effects of microaggressions can have implications on people’s self-esteem, produce anger and frustration, deny equal access in many areas (education, employment, health care) and impact identity development in children and adolescents.

Whereas prejudice is the judgement or opinion of an individual, racism can be defined as a **system** of advantage based on race.

Racism is not only based on people’s individual prejudices but by a system which involves cultural messages and institutional policies and practices.

Explicit Bias/Active racism is the blatant, intentional acts of racial bigotry and discrimination due to attitudes and beliefs about a person or group on a conscious level.

Implicit bias is the brain’s automatic, instant association or attitudes or stereotypes toward a particular group; affects understanding and actions on an unconscious level.

Passive racism/Covert racism refers to the more subtle forms of racism such as laughing at a racist joke, ignoring exclusionary hiring practices.

Racially biased decisions are often hidden or rationalized with an explanation that society is more willing to accept.

All of us should be encouraged to examine our own thoughts and behaviors.

Allow for self examination and ask yourself:

- Am I perpetuating and reinforcing the negative messages that are pervasive in our culture? Or am I seeking to challenge them?
- Am I acknowledging and examining my own prejudices and how rigid categorizations have negative impacts on other people?

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL DIALOGUE:

- Always use a respectful tone and remain nonjudgmental. Use active listening!
- Allow yourself to participate and be vulnerable, but share at the level you are comfortable with
- Agree to disagree. Ask questions if you don't understand someone's perspective. Try to see others' perspectives before stating your opinion
- Recognize the perspective/worldview of people from marginalized groups as being unique and different
- Approach unexpected ideas with curiosity, not debate. Remain fully present in the conversation
- Remember, the goal is not to always agree, but to gain a deeper understanding
- Be mindful of deescalating the conversation, if necessary
- Use open ended questions to allow people to express thoughts and feelings
- Use "I" statements and try to avoid making generalizations when speaking about your thoughts or experiences
 - It is my understanding that _____
 - It has been my experience that _____

RACISM IN THE WORKPLACE:

According to the Society of Human Resources:

- 81% of college-educated Black Americans report that they have experienced racism in the workplace and 17% report experiencing it regularly.
- Employers show a preference for white candidates with a criminal background over Black candidates with a clean record.
- Black Americans are twice as likely to be unemployed than white Americans.

If you are confronted with racism in the workplace:

- Know that our family of organizations has a no tolerance policy for racism.
- Inform ANY member of HR immediately.
- Be assured that an immediate investigation will commence.
- Severe disciplinary action or termination will apply if the findings are validated.
- DO NOT engage in any back-and-forth communication on racist comments or activity.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

American Psychological Association- Facing the Divide: Psychology's Conversation on Race and Health

Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria by Beverly Daniel Tatum, PhD

Diversity Happenings around the agency...

Ed Center:

April

We recognized Autism Awareness Month. A new bulletin board displayed was the starting point to raising conversation and our staff's awareness that for many advocates for autism, neither the puzzle piece nor the color blue are the desired symbols of autism. Many advocates now view the puzzle piece as a symbolism that autistic people are a problem to be solved or are not considered whole with their disability. Many advocates also see puzzle pieces as typically played by children which tends to promote a stereotype that autism is a children's diagnosis. For many advocates the new preferred symbol of autism is the infinite symbol. This symbol represents the diversity of the autism spectrum as well as the greater neurodiversity movement. This movement advocates for several goals, including greater acceptance of autistic behaviors, services that focus on improving quality of life rather than on imitating behaviors of neurotypical peers and the recognition of the autistic community as a minority group. Going forward awareness and the education of this movement will have great importance for all educators when planning services and creating goals that are appropriate for these students.



May

May was Mental Health Awareness Month. Each room including classroom, office, and therapy rooms were given a green ribbon to post outside their door. Rather than doing a bulletin board in one area of the building, we wanted the ribbons visible throughout the school. Staff were invited to write any words on their ribbon that they felt were meaningful to this cause. Along with this activity we also joined in on a BCCS schoolwide "Light it Up Green Day". Many of the staff and students wore green, which is the color associated with mental health awareness, and pictures were sent to our media desk in order to flood social media showing our support.





JUNE

We started off June by recognizing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Pride Month. This month-long celebration demonstrated how LGBTQ Americans have strengthened our country, by using their talent and creativity to help create awareness and goodwill. As we continued to recognize the diversity among our staff and students, each classroom was given a sign to post that is a reminder that “everyone”, both staff and students, are included, accepted and part of our Ed Center family.

THIS CLASSROOM IS A

	DIVERSE
	INCLUSIVE
	ACCEPTING
	WELCOMING
	SAFE SPACE
	FOR EVERYONE



We are also celebrating the diversity of our graduating students by having an “All about Me” bulletin board just for our graduates.

Cissy Birnbaum:

April:

We celebrated Autism Awareness Month

Earth Day – In art the classed did projects about the recycling – the importance of recycling and why we do it.

May:

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. In an effort to raise awareness about mental illnesses and reduce the stigma that surrounds them, we had all of the classes hang up green ribbons outside their classrooms. Some classrooms choose to write a word or phrase on it that was related to mental health, others just hung up the ribbon as is. We also planned, along with the other BCCS sites, a school wide event, "Light it up Green Day" on Friday, May 14th for everyone to dress in green in support of mental health awareness.

In art – the classes did word art projects with the words *"CHOOSE KINDNESS"* and *"YOUR WORDS MATTER."*

To celebrate Cinco de Mayo, many of the classes did special lessons and projects that focused on Mexican culture and heritage.

For Memorial Day, we also worked with the students to learn more about what it means to be a veteran and talked about the importance of honoring our veterans.

June

Pride Month – we are recognizing how LGBTQ Americans have strengthened our country by using their talent and creativity to help create awareness and goodwill. As we continue to recognize the diversity among our staff and students, each classroom is hanging up a "safe space pride poster" as a reminder that everyone is included, accepted, and part of our BCCS family.

In art , all of the students are making foot/shoe prints and decorating them however they choose. This is to represent that each individual person has his/her own unique personality and style and each one is equally important and special.

We are also honoring the graduates this month by making an "All About Me" theme bulletin board in the main lobby featuring the 2021 graduates.

BCW

April – Every Friday we "Light It Up Blue" in support of people with Autism. We also celebrated the Week of the Young Child.



May – Mental Health Awareness “Light It Up Green” 5/14

We displayed and handed out informational handouts for staff regarding mental health and highlighted the variety of supports available. We also handed out stress balls, smiley face masks and skittles (“Be a rainbow in someone else’s cloud”)



(Office Staff)

Words are one of the most powerful forces for change in our lives. We encouraged staff to write a positive word that begins with the first letter of their name.



June

We highlighted LGBTQIA+ Pride Month. All staff received rainbow bracelets and will be shown the video “My Shadow is Pink” which helps to inform staff of the gender stereotypes that exist and the importance of promoting acceptance for being who you are.

Staff viewed the video on the history of Juneteenth. To tie into Juneteenth, staff visited the chalkboard to answer: “What does freedom mean to you?”

Rock Garden: Each year, we ask students and families to help us “grow our garden.” This project allows children and families to work together and create a piece of art that can be shared with the community.

Marcus Avenue:

During the month of April staff and students wore blue every Friday to highlight Autism Acceptance

In May, in honor of Mental Health Awareness, social work staff hosted staff and parent workshops on the topic of mental health, offering information and resources.

During June, rainbow signage hangs throughout the building in recognition of Pride month.

Test Your Knowledge About the LGBT+ Community

In recognition of June being “Pride Month”, the DEI Committee sent out a quiz for all staff about the LGBT+ community. The questions and answers are below.

1. How many members of the LGBTQ+ community felt they were discriminated against in the past year?

37%

2. When did demonstrations for gay rights begin in the United States?

1965

3. Federal Laws protect LGBTQ+ from all forms of discrimination

FALSE

4. When was the nation’s first Gay Pride parade?

1970

5. How many States have laws that protect LGBTQ+ individuals from discrimination?

21

6. What university opened the first office for LGBT students?

University of Michigan

7. Violence against the LGBTQ+ community is now a thing of the past.

FALSE

8. What event occurred which led to June being selected as PRIDE Month?

Stonewall Riots

9. In 2000, this State became the first to legalize civil unions.

Vermont

10. In 2009, President Barack Obama invited this man, who was fired from his government job in the 1950s for being openly gay, to the signing ceremony for a presidential order barring discrimination in Federal benefits.

Frank Kameny

Food For Thought...

Canada Day Nanaimo Bar Cheesecake

Ingredients

Ingredient Checklist

- 2 ½ cups crushed chocolate cream-filled sandwich cookies (such as OREO® Cookies)
- ½ cup butter, melted
- ¼ cup chopped pecans
- ½ cup flaked coconut
- 4 (8 ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup white sugar
- ¼ cup custard powder (such as Bird's® Custard Powder)
- 4 eggs
- 6 (1 ounce) squares semisweet chocolate
- ½ cup heavy cream



Directions

Preheat an oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

Stir together the cookie crumbs, melted butter, pecans, and coconut in a bowl until the mixture is well combined. Press into the bottom of a 9x13-inch baking dish, and refrigerate while making filling.

Beat cream cheese, sugar, and custard powder in a large bowl with an electric mixer until light and fluffy, and beat in eggs, 1 at a time, beating each until fully incorporated before adding the next. Layer the filling over the crust.

Bake in the preheated oven until the center is almost set, about 40 minutes. Refrigerate the cheesecake until fully cold, at least 3 hours.

Melt the semisweet chocolate in a saucepan over very low heat with the cream, and stir until the mixture is smooth and well blended. Pour the chocolate mixture over the cheesecake, spread with a spatula to cover the middle layer, and refrigerate until the topping is firm, 15 to 20 minutes. Serve cold. Store leftovers in refrigerator.

More Food For Thought...

Fourth of July Potato Salad

Ingredients

- 3 pounds potatoes, peeled and diced
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons white sugar
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons dry mustard
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon ground black pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup mayonnaise
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour cream
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup heavy cream
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped onion
- 3 hard-cooked eggs, peeled and chopped



Directions

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil, add the potatoes and let cook until tender. While the potatoes cook, in a large bowl, whisk together the vinegar, sugar, mustard, salt and pepper. Drain the potatoes, stir them into the vinegar mixture and let them marinate for 30 minutes to absorb the flavors.

In a small bowl, whisk the mayonnaise, sour cream and heavy cream. Fold this creamy mixture into the potato mixture along with the onions and hard-cooked eggs. Cover and chill before serving if you wish. (This salad keeps for up to 3 days in the refrigerator.)

COMING SOON

DEI Conversation Hour – July 14, 2021

August 11 and 18, 2021 – Lunch and Learn - LGBTQIA

July/August 2021– Ice Cream Socials

October 2021– Lunch and Learn – Disability Awareness

November 2021- Friendsgiving Activity

January 2022 – Lunch and Learn – “Isms”

Spring 2022 – Statewide DEI Conference