

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER BY THE DEI OFFICE

Table of Contents

- Making Connections Through DEI Discourse. P.2
- Did You Know? P.4
- Words And Concepts of the Quarter P.6
- This Quarter... P.8
- Days of the Quarter (July, August, September) P.12
- Employee Inclusive Series P.18
- Call for Submissions, Feedback and Suggestions P.19



Making Connections Through DEI Discourse

Empowering Equity: The Role of Advocacy in Creating Inclusive Spaces

In the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) sector, true equity goes beyond providing services, it means ensuring that everyone has a voice, choice, and opportunity to thrive. Advocacy plays a central role in making this vision a reality. It is not only about speaking up for others but also about empowering people to speak for themselves, shaping environments where everyone belongs.

Advocacy in the context of equity has many forms. Sometimes it is systemic, focused on changing policies that create barriers. Other times it is personal, ensuring that everyone is heard in their daily lives—from education and healthcare decisions to community participation and employment opportunities. Both levels of advocacy are essential in creating inclusive spaces.

Why Advocacy Matters in DEI

- **Amplifying voices:** Advocacy ensures that people with IDD are not only included but also central in decision-making, affirming that their lived experiences shape policies and practices.
- **Challenging inequities:** It addresses disparities in access to resources, opportunities, and respect, creating a more just and equitable environment.
- **Building allies:** Advocacy strengthens solidarity, encouraging families, providers, colleagues, and the wider community to serve as partners in equity.

The Power of Inclusive Spaces

An inclusive space is more than a welcoming environment, it is one where differences are respected, and equity is practiced daily. In the workplace, this means ensuring that staff with disabilities are supported, valued, and able to grow. In the broader community, it means creating pathways where people with IDD can live self-determined lives, pursue careers, engage socially, and contribute fully.

How We Can Advocate Together

- Listen actively to the voices of people with lived experience.
- Question practices that limit participation or potential.
- Celebrate diverse strengths and identities.
- Partner with families, community organizations, and policymakers to push for equity-driven change.
- Commit to ongoing learning about the barriers everyone faces and ways to dismantle them.



When we approach advocacy with a mindset of equity, we move closer to a world where inclusion is no longer an exception but the norm. Each step we take, whether big policy changes or small everyday actions—creates ripples that empower equity and transform lives.

References and Resources

- Lee, S.-H., Kang, H.-N., & Kim, S. (2023). The experiences of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, parents, and teachers regarding health self-advocacy program with school-home connection: A qualitative study. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 14, 1273324. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2023.1273324>
- Petri, J., Halvorsen, A., & Wiesel, I. (2025). Peer-led self-advocacy for people with intellectual disability through the lens of “freedom through encounter”. *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*, 50(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.3109/13668250.2024.2402917>
- Szlamka, Z., Tekola, B., Hoekstra, R., & Hanlon, C. (2022). The role of advocacy and empowerment in shaping service development for families raising children with developmental disabilities. *Health Expectations*, 25(5), 1882–1891. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.13539>
- American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) – Advocacy Tools. https://www.aaid.org/docs/default-source/prepressarticles/establishing-an-advocacy-activities-scale-for-parents-of-individuals-with-intellectual-and-developmental-disabilities.pdf?sfvrsn=6d0e0221_0
- Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies (CCIDS) at the University of Maine <https://ccids.umaine.edu/advocacy-and-self-advocacy/>
- Introducing Developmental Disability (CUNY) – Self-Advocacy Section <https://introducingdevelopmentaldisability.commons.gc.cuny.edu/section-3/>
- National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) <https://nacdd.org/>
- The ARC – Advocacy and Policy Center <https://thearc.org/policy-advocacy/>



Did You Know?

Bias and Microaggressions can show up in ways we might not even realize?

Bias

Bias is often characterized as stereotypes about people based on the group to which they belong and/or based on an immutable physical characteristic they possess, such as their gender, race, disability, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. This type of bias can have harmful real-world outcomes. People may or may not be aware that they hold these biases.

Conscious Bias or Explicit Bias

The attitudes or beliefs someone knowingly holds. In other words, individuals are aware of their attitudes or beliefs and express them directly.

Unconscious Bias or Implicit Bias

Unintentional or automatic mental associations an individual has. Unconscious bias operates outside of a person's awareness and may not directly correlate with their beliefs and values. Unconscious bias is expressed indirectly since it seeps into a person's attitudes and behaviors, causing an individual to make assumptions based on limited information to fill in gaps and make decisions.

Microaggressions

Defined as the everyday, subtle, intentional – and oftentimes unintentional – interactions or behaviors that communicate some sort of bias toward historically marginalized groups. The difference between microaggressions and overt discrimination or macroaggression, is that people who commit microaggressions might not even be aware of them.



Did You Know?

Bias and Microaggressions can show up in ways we might not even realize?

Continued...

Learn more by watching the following videos

How To Reduce Bias In Your Workplace By Kim Scott & Trier Bryant

We all have bias, especially the unconscious kind and it's preventing us from doing our best work. Gone unchecked, bias can make employees feel resentful, frustrated and silenced, and it can even lead to outright discrimination and harassment. Check out three keyways to reduce bias at work, according to Just Work cofounders Kim Scott and Trier Bryant.



[Learn more](#)

How To Overcome Our Biases? Walk Boldly Toward Them By Verna Myers

Our biases can be dangerous, even deadly – as we've seen in the cases of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and Eric Garner, in Staten Island, New York. Diversity advocate Verna Myers looks closely at some of the subconscious attitudes we hold toward out-groups. She makes a plea to all people: Acknowledge your biases. Then move toward, not away from, the groups that make you uncomfortable. In a funny, impassioned, important talk, she shows us how.



[Learn more](#)

How Prejudiced Are You? Recognizing And Combating Unconscious Bias By Jennefer Witter

Overt racism is easy to identify. But what about unconscious bias – soft prejudices that we all have, but of which we are basically unaware? In today's heated social and global climate, this lack of awareness can deeply impact your professional and personal life, as well as the way you unintentionally communicate and think. It can even have serious economic ramifications. This provocative talk will take a deep dive into the subject, where you will confront your own biases and see how you – regardless of race, status, income or education – have been a victim of unconscious bias.



[Learn more](#)

Words & Concepts of the Quarter

Cultural Humility in Practice – Engaging in ongoing self-reflection, education, and community engagement.

Cultural humility is the practice of approaching cultural differences with openness, self-awareness, and a willingness to learn, rather than assuming expertise about the lived experiences of others. While “cultural competence” suggests that one can master knowledge of different cultures, cultural humility acknowledges that cultures are dynamic, complex, and constantly evolving. No one can ever fully understand another person’s background or identity; instead, cultural humility invites us into a lifelong process of reflection, learning, and respectful engagement.

At its heart, cultural humility asks us to look inward first, acknowledging our own biases, privileges, and limitations. This means recognizing that everyone sees the world through a particular lens shaped by their upbringing, experiences, and social position. By developing awareness of these perspectives, we can more effectively avoid making assumptions, reduce the risk of stereotyping, and approach interactions with genuine curiosity and respect.

Practicing cultural humility also requires a shift in mindset: from seeing ourselves as experts on others’ cultures to seeing ourselves as learners in every interaction. This involves active listening, asking thoughtful and respectful questions, and remaining open to feedback even when it is uncomfortable. Importantly, cultural humility also means recognizing and addressing power dynamics in relationships, whether in healthcare, education, workplaces, or community spaces.

In everyday practice, cultural humility might look like pausing before jumping to conclusions, giving space for others to express their perspectives, adapting our communication style to foster understanding, and showing respect for cultural practices and values that differ from our own. It also requires humility in leadership—creating environments where diverse voices are not only heard but valued and centered in decision-making. Beyond individual practice, cultural humility is also about collective responsibility. It calls us to move from awareness to action—integrating humility into policies, organizational practices, and community engagement efforts. When we partner with communities rather than speaking for them, we honor lived experiences and co-create solutions that truly meet people’s needs. This community-centered approach acknowledges that those most impacted by inequities are the true experts of their own lives.



In conclusion, cultural humility is not a one-time goal but an ongoing journey. It is sustained through continuous self-reflection, intentional education, and meaningful community engagement. By committing to this practice, we can build stronger bridges across differences, dismantle systemic barriers, and promote authentic cross-cultural understanding. In doing so, we move closer to creating communities and workplaces where every person feels valued, respected, and included.

👉 Reflection for You:

How do you practice cultural humility in your daily interactions, both personally and professionally? You may choose to respond to any of the following reflection prompts:

- Personal Growth – Think of a time when you realized your perspective was limited. What did that moment teach you about the importance of listening and learning from others?
- Workplace Practice – How can practicing cultural humility improve teamwork and communication in our workplace? Can you share an example?
- Community Engagement – What does it mean to you to partner with communities rather than working for them? How might this approach strengthen equity and inclusion efforts?
- We encourage you to take a few moments to reflect and, if you'd like, share your responses with us. You can email your reflections to snoveiri@ahrc.org or eadenekan@ahrc.org.

To recognize the time and effort you invest, we will highlight thoughtful reflections in future newsletters.

By practicing cultural humility together and engaging not only in reflection but also in community dialogue, we can strengthen cross-cultural understanding and foster a more inclusive workplace where everyone feels valued and heard.



This Quarter...

July

BIPOC Mental Health Month



BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month is observed annually in July to raise awareness about the unique mental health challenges faced by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

[Learn more](#)

Disability Pride Month



Disability Pride Month commemorates the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and recognizes the history, achievements, and rights of the disability community. The 2025 theme, chosen by The Arc's National Council of Self-Advocates, was "We Belong Here, and We're Here to Stay," which serves as a call to action against ableism and exclusion.

[Learn more](#)

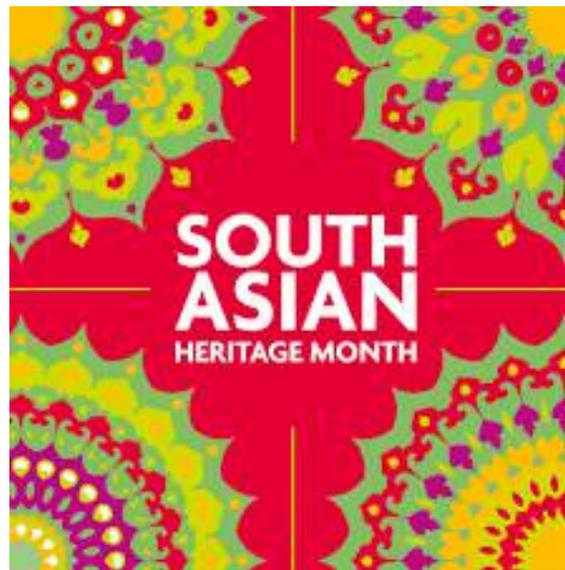
French American Heritage Month



This month recognizes the the significant partnership between France and the U.S., from historical alliances to shared democratic ideals. Celebrations often involve exploring French culture, cuisine, and history through various community and educational events.

[Learn more](#)

South Asian American Heritage month



South Asian Heritage Month for 2025 is celebrated annually from July 18 to August 17. The theme for this year's celebration is "Roots to Routes," focusing on the journeys that have shaped South Asian communities and the cultural heritage that influences society. The dates hold historical significance, marking key events like the [Indian Independence Act](#) and [Pakistan Independence Day](#).

[Learn more](#)

August

National Civility month



© 2019 CIVILITY.MOON

National Civility Month focuses on demonstrating respectful behavior and courtesy, with related cultural observances. The month emphasizes the importance of active listening, showing appreciation, and fostering positive interactions to build stronger communities.

[Learn more](#)

September

National Guide Dog Month



This month is to celebrate the remarkable animals that assist individuals with visual impairments. We honor the guide dogs, their trainers, and organizations that empower people to navigate the world with confidence and independence. Let's pay tribute to their intelligence, loyalty, and devotion of the guide dogs.

[Learn more](#)

National Suicide Prevention Month



This is a time to acknowledge the struggles of those affected by suicide and reaffirm our commitment to support. We must recognize the warning signs, create a safety net of empathy, and shatter the stigma surrounding mental health. Together, we can foster a culture of openness and ensure those struggling know they have a supportive community. Let's continue the conversation and advocate for resources and support.

[Learn more](#)

National Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept 15 - Oct 15)



This Month (September 15 - October 15) celebrates the rich cultural contributions of Hispanic and Latino people in the US. This vibrant observance honors their history, pioneering spirit, and impact on American society. We revel in the music, dance, traditions, and art of Hispanic culture, while acknowledging the challenges faced by this community and recommitting to inclusivity and equity.

¡Viva la herencia hispana!

[Learn more](#)

Days of the Quarter

July

July 11 World Population Day



[Learn more](#)

July 14 International Non-Binary Peoples Day



[Learn More](#)

July 18 International Nelson Mandela Day



[Learn more](#)

July 26 National Disability Independence Day



[Learn more](#)

July 30 International Day of Friendship



[Learn more](#)

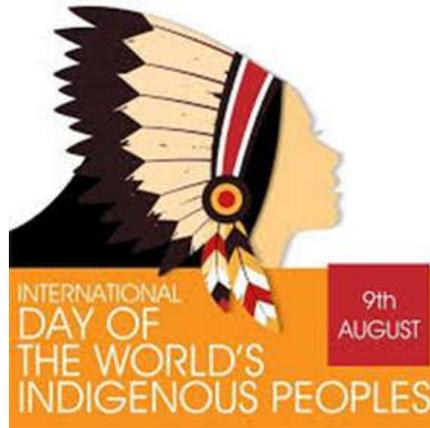
August

August 7 Purple Heart Day



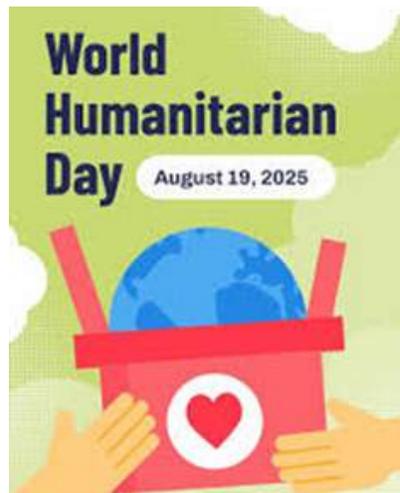
[Learn more](#)

August 9 International Day of the World's Indigenous People



[Learn more](#)

August 19 World Humanitarian Day



[Learn more](#)

August 21 Senior Citizens Day



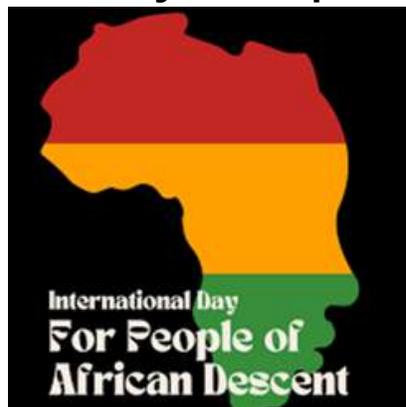
[Learn more](#)

August 26 Women’s Equality Day



[Learn more](#)

August 31 International Day of People of African Descent



[Learn more](#)

September

September 2 Labor Day



[Learn more](#)

September 5 International Day of Charity



[Learn more](#)

September 20, 2025: HeforShe movement anniversary



[Learn more](#)

September 21 International Day of Peace



[Learn more](#)

September 22 American Business Women's Day



[Learn more](#)

September 27 National Native American Day



[Learn more](#)

September 26 European Day of Languages



[Learn more](#)

Employee Inclusive Series

Picture Speaks with Noah Probert, DEI Liaison

This quarter, our Employee Inclusive Series shines spotlight on Noah Probert, a dedicated DEI Liaison who is proud to share some of his most beautiful memories from his time at Camp Loyaltown.

For Noah, Camp Loyaltown represents more than just a place of work – it is a space filled with connection, joy, and unforgettable moments of inclusion. From laughter shared around campfires, to the teamwork of staff supporting one another through long days, and the smiles of campers experiencing belonging in their own unique ways, each memory speaks volumes about the heart of our community.

“Camp Loyaltown is where we see diversity come alive in practice,” Noah reflects. “It’s a place where every culture, language, and personal story adds to the fabric of camp life. The friendships we form here – across borders and differences – show us what true inclusion feels like.”

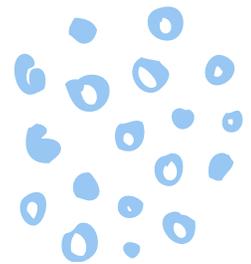
Through photos capturing staff camaraderie, camper achievements, and quiet moments of care, Noah reminds us that inclusion is not just a principle, but a lived experience. His reflections encourage us all to celebrate the joy in diversity and to continue building spaces where everyone feels seen, valued, and welcomed.



Call for Submissions, Feedback and Suggestions

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Monthly Newsletter invites contributions to our monthly publication that fits into the following categories:

- News items and announcements
- Short stories
- Recognitions
- Member profiles



Tell us what you want to see more of!

Send us your feedback!



Submit your materials to:
Dr. Sarah Gonzalez Noveiri
DEI Officer
snoveiri@ahrc.org