

# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) e-Zine

At Enterprise Bank, people and relationships come first. We encourage and foster a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion, where everyone feels valued and respected. We are committed to a caring workplace that recognizes the importance of making a meaningful, positive difference in the lives of our team members, customers, and communities. Please [click here](#) for more information. To learn about Enterprise Bank's history and Core Values, [click here](#).

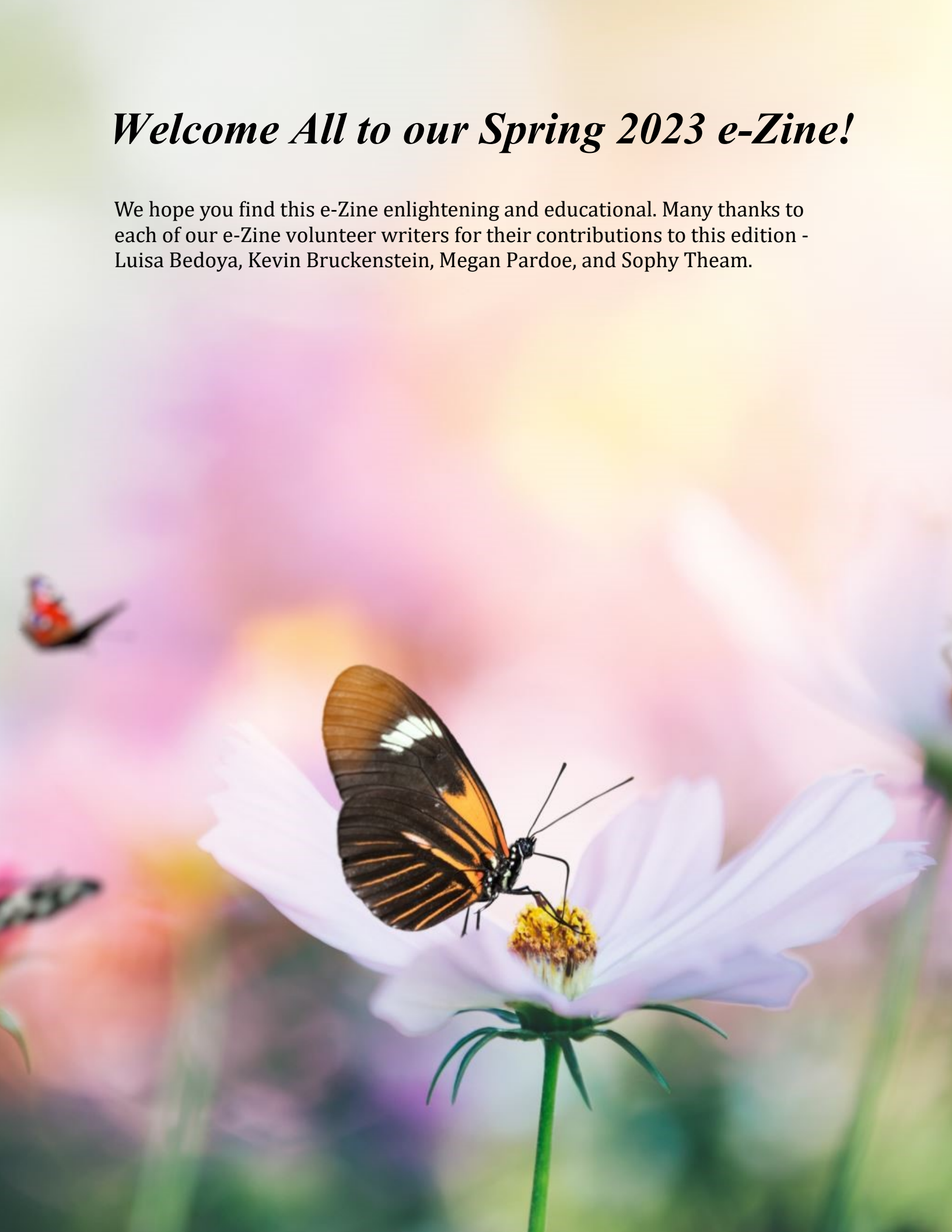
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Personal views and opinions expressed here are those of individual volunteer contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Enterprise Bank.

# *Welcome All to our Spring 2023 e-Zine!*

We hope you find this e-Zine enlightening and educational. Many thanks to each of our e-Zine volunteer writers for their contributions to this edition - Luisa Bedoya, Kevin Bruckenstein, Megan Pardoe, and Sophy Theam.





# WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY— APRIL 2ND

By Luisa Bedoya

World Autism Awareness Day, which recognizes and spreads awareness for the rights of people with autism, is observed on April 2. Autism spectrum disorder (autism) is a condition that typically starts during childhood and continues into adulthood.

Autism is a developmental disorder characterized by behavioral and communicational affections that impact a person's ability to navigate social interactions that also causes repetitive and restricted behavior. According to the Centers for Disease Control, autism affects an estimated 1 in 44 children in the United States today.

April 2 was designated as World Autism Awareness Day by the United Nations General Assembly under Resolution 62/139, which was adopted on December 18, 2007, to encourage member states to take action in raising awareness about people with autism spectrum disorder and to support the research of finding new ways to improve wellness and inclusion.

The day also celebrates the resilience of those affected by the disorder. Schools are encouraged to educate children about autism and to encourage acceptance and tolerance. This is especially important given the prevalence of experiencing bullying among autistic children.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has also highlighted the need for greater support for people with autism, particularly at the community level. "We must also establish inclusive education systems and training programs that enable students with autism to access the educational path of their choice. And we must make technology solutions available for persons with autism to live independently in their communities."

On April 2, and throughout the month, let us focus on sharing stories and providing opportunities to increase understanding and acceptance of people with autism, fostering worldwide support. This year, let's commit to creating a world where all people with autism can reach their full potential.



# WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY— APRIL 2ND (cont'd)

By Luisa Bedoya

## Autism Statistics & Facts:

### Autism Prevalence

- In 2021, the CDC reported that approximately 1 in 44 children in the U.S. are diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), according to 2018 data.
  - 1 in 27 boys identified with autism
  - 1 in 116 girls identified with autism
- Boys are about four times more likely to be diagnosed with autism than girls.
- Minority groups tend to be diagnosed later and less often.
- There is no medical detection for autism.

### Autism In Adulthood

- Many young adults with autism do not receive any healthcare for years after they stop seeing a pediatrician.
- More than half of young adults with autism remain unemployed and unenrolled in higher education in the two years after high school.
- Research demonstrates that job activities that encourage independence reduce autism symptoms and increase daily living skills.
- Of the nearly 18,000 people with autism who used state-funded vocational rehabilitation programs in 2014, only 60 percent left the program with a job.



[Congenital heart disease and autism: A possible link? - Harvard Health](#)

Sources:

[WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY - April 2, 2023 - National Today](#)  
[UN chief calls for greater inclusion, marking World Autism Awareness Day | UN News](#)  
[Autism Statistics and Facts | Autism Speaks](#)



# Passover

By Kevin Bruckenstein

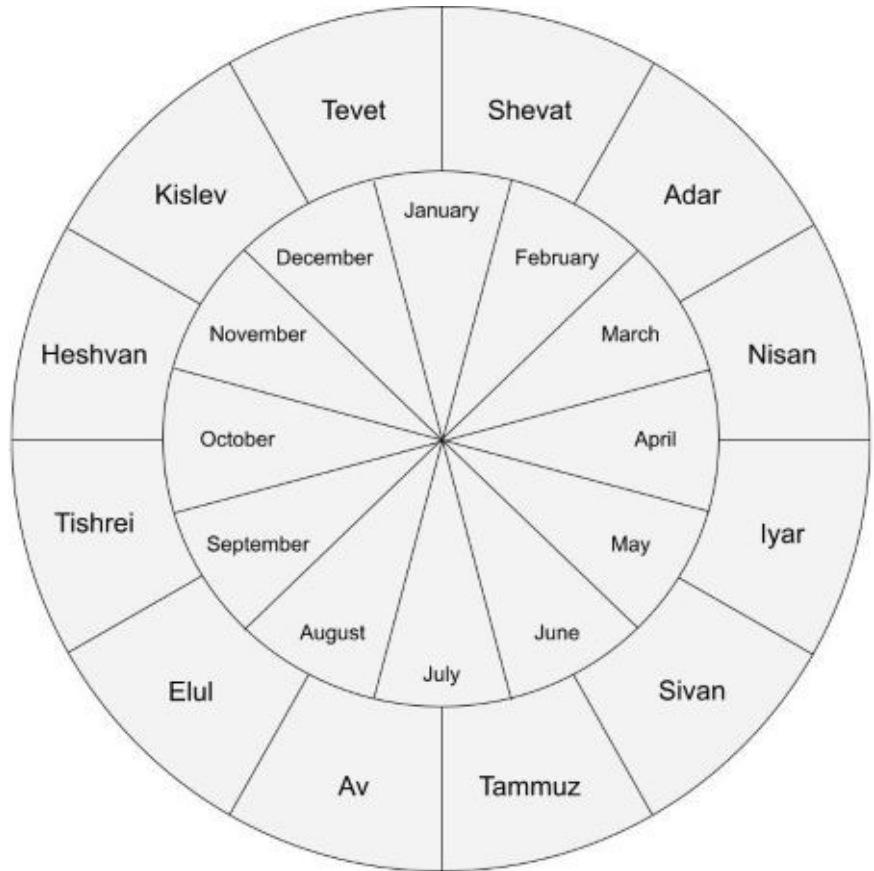
Passover, or Pesach in Hebrew, is one of Judaism's most widely celebrated holidays. The week-long holiday commemorates the enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt and their subsequent escape. Its date is set according to the lunar-based Hebrew calendar, occurring each year during the Hebrew month of Nisan (the Hebrew calendar differs from the Gregorian calendar we are familiar with, and thus begins on a different date each year in the Gregorian calendar).

## The Story

The story of Passover, found in the book of Exodus in the Hebrew Bible (the Torah), recounts how Israelites settled in Egypt and lived there in harmony for many generations until a hostile pharaoh, fearing the growth of the Israelite's population, enslaved them and ordered that Jewish newborn males be killed.

One Israelite woman, upon giving birth to a baby boy, placed her baby in a basket and set him floating down the Nile River near a bathing area in an attempt to save him. The baby was found by the pharaoh's daughter who rescued him, named him Moses, and raised him as her own.

Growing up in the palace, Moses did not know about his past. In adulthood, he came to learn of his true identity and of the brutal treatment of his people. One day, he witnessed an Egyptian slave master beating an Israelite slave and ended up killing the slave master. Realizing what he had done, Moses fled and became a shepherd in a different land.



[Hebrew Calendar History, Components & Overview | Jewish Calendar | Study.com](#)

# Passover (cont'd)

By Kevin Bruckenstein

Years later, Moses encountered a burning bush—one that remained undamaged within the flames—and heard God's voice. God commanded Moses to return to Egypt and free the Israelites from slavery. Along with his brother, Aaron, Moses went to the pharaoh and demanded that he free the Jews ("Let my people go," Moses tells Pharaoh in Exodus 5:1).

The pharaoh refused, so God told Moses that he would set a series of plagues upon the Egyptians until the pharaoh released the Jews. The plagues that followed were: turning the water of the Nile to blood, frogs, lice, wild beasts, cattle disease, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and the slaying of the Egyptians' firstborn sons. Prior to the tenth plague, God tells Moses to have the Israelites mark their doorframes with lamb's blood so that the plague (the Angel of Death) would pass over their homes (hence, "Passover"), sparing their sons.

After the tenth plague, which claimed the pharaoh's son, the pharaoh finally relents and releases the Israelites. They quickly packed up and fled Egypt. In their haste, they did not have enough time to even allow for their bread to rise (hence the holiday's prohibition on eating leavened or risen grain products and the custom of eating matzah—unleavened bread).

However, the pharaoh soon regretted his decision and led his army in pursuit of the Israelites. He and his army chased the Israelites to the Red Sea where they became trapped between the sea and the approaching army. As all hope seemed lost, God reached out to Moses and instructed him to lift his staff over the sea. Upon doing so, a miracle occurred—God split the sea, enabling the Israelites to walk across the sea floor to the opposite shore. Once the final Israelite had crossed, the sea closed anew, drowning the pursuing pharaoh and his soldiers.

According to the Torah, the Jews then began their 40-year journey through the Sinai desert, ultimately reaching their ancestral home in Canaan, later known as the Land of Israel.



[Passover: History | Reform Judaism](#)



# Passover (cont'd)

By Kevin Bruckenstein

## Passover Seder & Traditions

The seder (“order”) is the ritual meal that is the centerpiece of Passover celebrations. It incorporates foods that represent elements of the story, including shank bone (zeroa), egg (beitzah), bitter herbs (maror), vegetables (karpas), and a sweet paste called haroset.

Bitter herbs (often lettuce and horseradish) stand for the bitterness of slavery. A roasted shank bone commemorates the sacrificial lamb. An egg has multiple interpretations: some hold that it stands for new life while others see it as standing for the Jewish people’s mourning over the struggles that awaited them in exile. Vegetables are dipped into saltwater representing the tears of the enslaved Israelites. Haroset, a sweet paste made of apples, wine, and walnuts or dried fruits, represents the mortar the enslaved Israelites used to build Egyptian structures.



The Passover Seder Plate:

During a traditional seder, participants eat unleavened bread, or matzah, three times, and drink wine four times. They read from a special text called the Haggadah—a guide to the rite—and recount the story of Passover. Children play an important role in the seder and are expected to take part in many of its customs. At one point during the meal, the youngest child present recites the four questions which ask what distinguishes this special night from all other nights. Children may also have the chance to search for an afikomen—a piece of broken matzoh—that has been hidden in the home.

Every seder is different and is governed by community and family traditions.

## Sources

[History Behind 7 Passover Traditions: Seder, No Bread, More | Time](#)

[Passover: History | Reform Judaism](#)

[Passover - Bible, Meaning & Traditions - HISTORY](#)

[A brief history of Passover, which honors resilience amid adversity \(nationalgeographic.com\)](#)

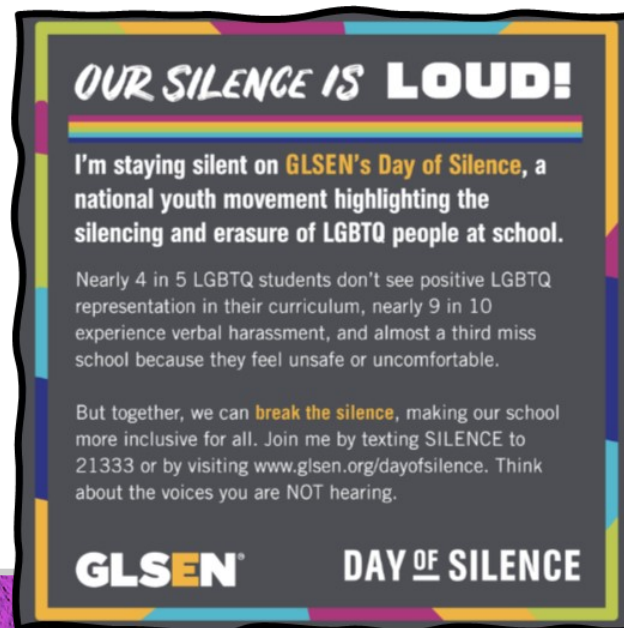
# Pride Month and Beyond: LGBTQIA+ Holidays

By Megan Pardoe

Each June, we observe Pride Month which celebrates the LGBTQIA+ rights movement and the culture behind LGBTQIA+ history. June was declared pride month in June of 1969 after the famous Stonewall Riots and was federally recognized by President Bill Clinton in 1999. Although Pride Month is an important observance for the LGBTQIA+ community, there are also other important holidays that take place leading up to June.

April 14 marks this year's National Day of Silence protest, led by LGBTQIA+ students and allies that take a vow of silence in protest of the discrimination of LGBTQIA+ people in schools worldwide. National Day of Silence was started in 1996 by University of Virginia students, Maria Pulzetti and Jessie Gilliam, who noticed that gay youths were being harassed on campus and felt that the administration wasn't taking this seriously.

One year later, over 100 schools were participating worldwide and, in 2000, one of the largest LGBTQIA+ education networks—GLSEN—adopted this as their project, leading to millions of students participating. On National Day of Silence, students will pass out cards about why they are not speaking, put tape or draw Xs across their mouths, and end the day with Breaking the Silence rallies and events during which students share their experiences from the protest and bring attention to ways their schools and communities can become more inclusive. Last year in Massachusetts, the National Day of Silence took place at different levels of education. Students vowed to not speak at the University of Massachusetts campuses and had a meeting with the Dean. Wellesley Middle School staged a day of silence as well, and was supported by their GSAs (Gender and Sexualities Alliances). Students were allowed to practice this vow all day with a permission slip. National Day of Silence started as, and continues to be, a student-lead protest against the discrimination of the LGBTQIA+ community, participated in by students of all ages every year.



Source: GLSEN.org



# Pride Month and Beyond: LGBTQIA+ Holidays (cont'd)

By Megan Pardoe

May 17 is the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHOTB). It was created in 2004 and was celebrated for the first time a year later in 2005. The date of May 17 was specifically chosen to commemorate the World Health Organization's decision in 1990 to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder. The goal of the observance is to raise awareness about violence, repression, and discrimination of LGBTQ+ people. Common activities held on May 17 are marches, parades, festivals, and arts- and culture-based events. Since 2021, the IDAHOTB has been recognized in more than 130 countries. The theme for this year's celebration is "Together always: united in diversity." The theme celebrates the diversity within the LGBTQIA+ community and how differences can bring people closer together. The IDAHOTB is a much-needed holiday—it reminds of the hate that the LGBTQ+ community faces, educates us about the issues facing the community, and inspires us to work together to stop the hate.



Source: YouthCenter.com

Both the National Day of Silence and the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia are crucial observances for the LGBTQIA+ community. They celebrate the community and also help unite us against discrimination towards the LGBTQIA+ community. Both observances fall before Pride Month, but are nonetheless key parts of the community. This year Lowell Pride falls on June 3. This event will celebrate the community, inclusiveness, and serve as a safe space for the diversity in Lowell.

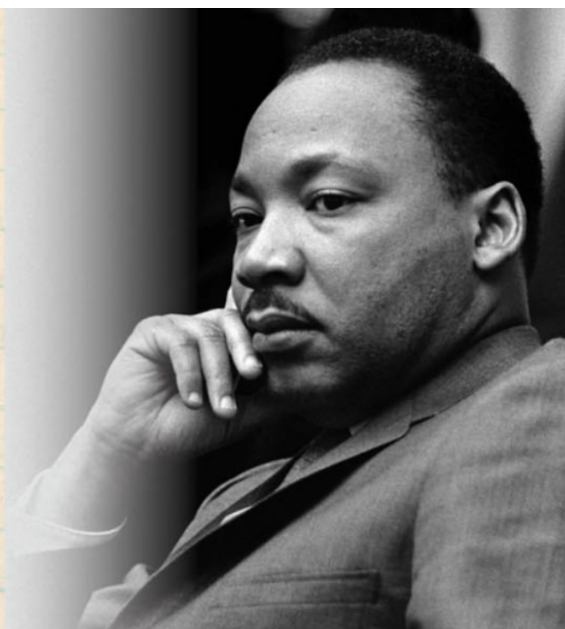
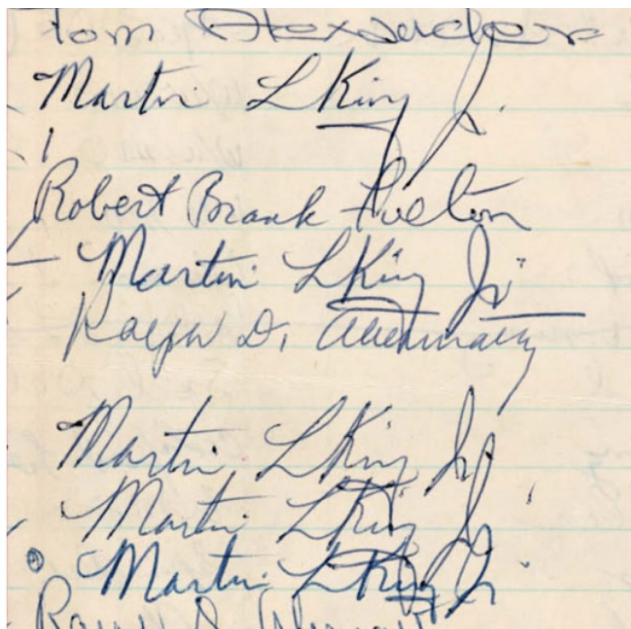


Source: CNN.com

Sources:

- [Day of Silence \(nationaltoday.com\)](https://nationaltoday.com/day-of-silence/)
- [Wellesley Middle School stages "Day of Silence" - Parents Defending Education](#)
- [☆ News ~ May17.org \(ericomcloud.net\)](https://www.ericomcloud.net/news/may17)
- [Lowell Pride](#)





## RECOGNITION OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF "LETTER FROM BIRMINGHAM JAIL"

**APRIL 16, 2023 | 2:30 PM TO 4:00 PM**

**Location:**

**ST. ANNE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH - EDSON HALL  
10 KIRK STREET, LOWELL, MA 01852**

Living the Dream Partners  
commemorate the 60th anniversary  
of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King  
Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail,"  
written on April 16, 1963, following his  
arrest and imprisonment in  
Birmingham on April 12, 1963, for  
protesting against racism and racial  
discrimination.

### AGENDA

A reading of The "Letter from  
Birmingham Jail" by members of  
the community

A facilitated discussion

Mix and mingle over refreshments.



<http://bit.ly/3Ls6Tss>



Living <sup>the</sup>  
**Dream**  
Partners

For more information, contact Justin Ford:  
**351-500-6449 | justinsford@cmaalowell.org**



# EARTH DAY—APRIL 22ND

By Luisa Bedoya



Our planet is an amazing place, but it needs our help to thrive! That's why each year, on April 22, more than a billion people celebrate Earth Day to raise awareness of environmental issues and to take action toward protecting the planet from things like pollution and deforestation. By taking part in activities like picking up litter and planting trees, we're making our world a happier, healthier place to live.

Earth Day is widely recognized as the largest secular observance in the world, marked as a day of action to change human behavior and create global, national, and local policy changes.

Now, the fight for a clean environment continues with increasing urgency as the ravages of climate change become more and more apparent every day.

Check out these Earth Day ideas to help save the planet any time of year.

## **Plant a Tree**

Researchers estimate that roughly 15 billion trees are cut down each year worldwide. To help offset that loss, consider planting a tree of your own. Trees absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen for people to breathe. They also provide shelter and food for animals such as squirrels and owls.



[Plant a Tree with PlantSnap - Plant](#)

# EARTH DAY— APRIL 22ND

(cont'd)

By: Luisa Bedoya

## **Turn off the lights**

Does that lamp *really* need to be on while the sun is out? Electricity doesn't just happen—it has to be produced from things around us. A lot of times it comes from fossil fuels (such as coal, oil, or natural gas) that contribute to [climate change](#).



[When to Turn Off Your Lights | Department of Energy](#)

## **Limit your water usage**

It might seem like it's everywhere, but clean, drinkable water is a limited resource. In fact, less than one percent of the water on Earth can be used by humans (the rest is either too salty or too difficult to access). Turning off the faucet while you brush your teeth can conserve up to eight gallons of water a day.



[5 Ways to Reduce Water Use in Your Food Processing Plant | Stellar Food for Thought](#)

Sources: [Earth Day \(nationalgeographic.com\)](#)  
[The History of Earth Day - Earth Day](#)



# Gathering of Nations and Land Acknowledgments

By Sophy Theam

From April 27–April 29, 2023, a Gathering of Nations Pow Wow and Miss Indian World will be taking place in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This annual festival began in 1983 at the University of Albuquerque as an opportunity to bring Native people together to celebrate their cultures. It grew very quickly to attract more than 20,000 attendees in 1986, and has now become the place for young Indigenous people to learn tribal traditions. This year it is being held at the Tingley Coliseum in Albuquerque.



Josiah Tsatoke of Norman, Okla., a member of the Kiowa tribe, dances during the Southern Style competition at the 2019 Gathering of Nations powwow in Tingley Coliseum. [Gathering of Nations live event canceled for second year - Albuquerque Journal \(abqjournal.com\)](https://www.abqjournal.com/2019/04/27/gathering-of-nations-live-event-canceled-for-second-year/)

When I saw that the Gathering of Nations was on the diversity calendar for April, I thought, “Wow, this is cool! I’d like to write about that!” When I learned it was an event all the way in Albuquerque, I felt it was so distant. However, I had always wanted to share how we all should be reflecting on the original owners of the land we inhabit.

After working for the Bank’s Learning & Development area for about 10 years, I transitioned my work to focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in March 2018. Since then, I have come across and participated in DEI meetings and events that have offered “land acknowledgments”—formal statements that recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of this land and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories—in their opening remarks.

I hadn’t known about them prior, and I don’t know how long the practice has been around, but through my involvement with various DEI groups, I now realize that it is important that we offer land acknowledgments when we can. They are an acknowledgement that the land right under our feet was once tribal lands, and that it had been for thousands of years prior to the settlement of Europeans and for millennia before this land came to be known as “American land.”

# Gathering of Nations and Land Acknowledgments (cont'd)

By Sophy Theam

Here is an example of a land acknowledgement I found on the UMass Lowell Multicultural Affairs site:

“We would like to acknowledge that the land we live, work, learn, and commune on is the original homelands of the Pennacook communities with the Pawtucket Village and Wamesit Village. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory, and we honor and respect the many diverse Indigenous peoples still connected to this land on which we gather.”

There is a website where you can look to see which Indigenous People lived in your area: [Source: Native Land website](#) | [Find the native land you are on using the Native Land website](#). For example, I reside in Chelmsford, MA and I was able to find that the land I live on originally belonged to the Agawam, Massa-adchu-es-et (Massachusetts) tribes.

Normally, land acknowledgements are initiated and shared by Indigenous people. However, it has been encouraged that people of various backgrounds share their own land acknowledgements. One source I found gave the following step-by-step instructions on how to write a land acknowledgement:

- Reflect on why you'd like to do a land acknowledgement, including what you hope to learn and share, and what the place you live in means to you. Making it personal will have more impact.
- Research the land you are on and learn how to pronounce tribal names and words.
- Recognize that history being told by a Native is very different from what is being taught in schools.
- Put the pieces together.
- Create space and time to share – add it to your agenda and invite questions from those who may be unfamiliar with the practice.
- Reflect and do more. Think about how you will use what you learned. Will you learn even more? Will you donate to Native communities?

I have been reflecting a lot over the last several years on how Indigenous people here in the United States have been treated. How their lands were taken away from them. How Native children were forced to go to boarding schools to “assimilate” into American culture—essentially wiping out their languages and cultures. How many Native women may have been sexually forced into marriages or relationships that have produced whiter and whiter offspring with each generation, so much so that their offspring no longer have any defining features of their original ethnic heritage. In fact, there could be so many “Americans” among us that have Native blood running through their veins, but for the most part, that identity is now invisible.



# Gathering of Nations and Land Acknowledgments (cont'd)

By Sophy Theam

George Duncan, Enterprise Bank's Founder and Chairman, recently (and coincidentally) shared with me an article from History Buzz about Andover's Town Seal, and I thought it would be great to incorporate that into this article somehow.



Andover's origin story goes something like this:

In the Massachusetts court in 1646, Sagamore Cutchamache (called Roger), on behalf of all the inhabitants of Cochichawicke, sold the land to John Woodbridge, a minister, for 6 pounds and a coat. This land became Andover and this origin story was imprinted on pins as well as the different versions of the Andover Town Seal. Roger and the Native inhabitants were allowed to fish for alewife in the Cochichawicke River—but that right would cease if they were to steal any corn or other crops grown by the settlers. "Roger" was also still able to farm on four acres of land.

However, there has been debate over how this origin story came to be, considering Cutchamashe was a Massachusetts sagamore who was based in the area now known as Dorchester – yes the one south of Boston. In fact, the original people who had lived between 1300–1700 in what is now Essex County were Western-Algonquin-speaking Pennacook-Abenaki tribes. By 1640, these bands—including those from the Pawtucket and other nearby villages—joined Passaconaway's New Hampshire Pennacook Confederacy due to the decrease in population and loss of land. If you'd like to learn more, feel free to subscribe to [History Buzz | History Buzz editorial team | Substack](#).

There is a very complicated history of which tribes resided where due to the fluidity of some of the Natives, the displacement of the People by force, the annihilation of many tribal people due to illnesses brought over from European settlers, and massacres. I feel so saddened that to this day, their invisible struggle to exist as a people continues on. Even some of their visible struggles are being ignored in present day "America."

# Gathering of Nations and Land Acknowledgments (cont'd)

By Sophy Theam

I would like to end by sharing a recent land acknowledgement example that Jen Bokoff, the writer who shared the steps for preparing one, wrote :

*Today, I'd like to pause to acknowledge the traditional and unceded land of the Coast Salish people, including the Duwamish People and the Suquamish People past and present. The land we each stand on, wherever we are, holds deep history, including success, pain, missed connections, fruitful partnerships, life, death, abuse, genocide, prayer, growth, discovery, and community.*

*Land carries memory. Growing up, Indigenous land was talked about solely in the context of the casinos being built down the road. Indigenous peoples were talked about in the past tense, like characters in a story from long ago and not like my neighbors, even though they were. I remember walking a beautiful trail to a waterfall in town and learning there about the Mohegans and the Pequots. Land carries memory. As a global pandemic looms large in our lives, we can be reminded of how the very land on which this session was to take place was the site of fatal smallpox, measles, influenza, and other disease outbreaks in the late 1700s – early 1800s brought by colonizers. Land carries memory. In 1855, those local tribes were part of the Treaty of Point Elliott, exchanging over 54,000 acres of their homeland for the reservation and other benefits promised by the United States government. The treaty was soon thereafter violated, triggering fighting and loss.*

*By acknowledging the land and all that it holds, I invite us all to learn more deeply about the places we occupy and the people who are our neighbors. Even this shared space of The Internet carries deep connections and welcoming neighbors, but also trauma and fear. Especially in this moment of pause from travel and spending extra time in our own backyards, it is deeply important to spend time learning about and reflecting on the history of that space, and what that has meant for different people who have occupied that same space throughout its history. I'll close with a quote from Chief Si'ahl, the Namesake of the City of Seattle: "This we know; The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know, all things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected."*

Sources:

[GON History - Gathering of Nations](#)  
[OMA Land Acknowledgement](#) | [Multicultural Affairs](#) | [Student Affairs](#) | [UMass Lowell \(uml.edu\)](#)

[Source: Native Land website](#) | [Find the native land you are on using the Native Land website](#)

[6 steps to writing and sharing a land acknowledgement – Jen Bokoff](#)

[https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/8d6993eb-4a6e-4b3b-b37a-05b757f1b957\\_659x182.gif](https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/8d6993eb-4a6e-4b3b-b37a-05b757f1b957_659x182.gif) (659×182) (substackcdn.com)

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# May is Mental Health Awareness Month

By Edie Joyce



Nearly 450 million people worldwide are currently living with a mental illness, yet nearly two thirds of people with a known mental illness never seek treatment. Each year in the U.S., one in five people will experience mental illness and more than half of us will be diagnosed with a mental health disorder during our lifetime. The National Institute of Mental Health defines mental health as person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Our mental health impacts the way we think, feel, act, make choices, and relate to others. There is a close relationship between mental and physical health. Scientists have proven that individuals with depression—a mood disorder—are at risk for diabetes, heart disease, and stroke and that those with chronic diseases are at higher risk for mental illness.

Mental health is difficult for us to discuss due to the stigma attached to the disease. Often referred to as an “invisible disease,” stigma and the accompanying shame prevents many people from seeking help and causes harmful isolation. Promoting mental health awareness will help to reduce the stigma. Here are some ways that you can increase awareness:

- Support friends and loved ones who are experiencing mental health challenges.
- Share your own experiences with mental health and encourage others to do so.
- Avoid stigmatizing or stereotyping language such as “crazy” or “psycho.”
- Help yourself and others by learning as much as you can about mental health from reliable resources.

There are many ways to increase your awareness of mental health topics. You may begin by visiting the National Alliance on Mental Illness at [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) or the National Institute of Mental Health at [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov).

# May is Older Americans Month – “equitable aging matters now more than ever”

By: Edie Joyce



According to the National Council on Aging ([www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org)), an older adult is an individual who is at least 65 years of age. Every president since John F. Kennedy in the early 1960s issued a formal proclamation for the month of May inviting the nation to pay tribute to older Americans in their communities through ceremonies, events, fairs, and other activities. In 1965, Congress passed the Older Americans Act in response to concern by policymakers about a lack of community social services for older persons. The act funds critical programs to keep seniors healthy and independent by providing meals, job training, senior centers, health promotion, benefits enrollment, caregiver support, and transportation. The law also established the Administration on Aging to administer grant programs and serve as the federal focal point on matters concerning older persons. These entities operate as divisions of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

***Older adults are one of the fastest growing groups in the nation and are expected to reach 80.8 million in 2040, or 22% of the U.S. population. Currently, 15 million older adults are economically insecure and 79% have at least two chronic health conditions. The 2020 median income of older persons was \$26,668 (\$35,808 for men and \$21,245 for women). In 2020, 5 million people age 65+ lived below the poverty level. Another 2.6 million were “near-poor.”***

These statistics underscore the vulnerabilities of our older Americans and the need to ensure protections for this population. The Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020 reauthorizes programs that help address equity issues through 2024. The act includes provisions to remove barriers to the aging network, increasing business acumen, capacity building, and supporting caregiver programs. President Biden's 2024 budget preserves benefits and supports services for older adults. The budget request addresses what Acting Administration for Community Living Administrator Alison Barkoff said are “two urgent priorities: strengthening and supporting the caregiving infrastructure and preventing abuse and neglect.”

Sources:

National Council on Aging [www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org); [Get the Facts on Older Americans \(ncoa.org\)](#)

Justice in Aging- Fighting Senior Poverty Through Law [www.justiceinaging.org](http://www.justiceinaging.org)

Administration for Community Living and Administration on Aging [www.acl.gov](http://www.acl.gov); [2021 Profile of Older Americans \(acl.gov\)](#)

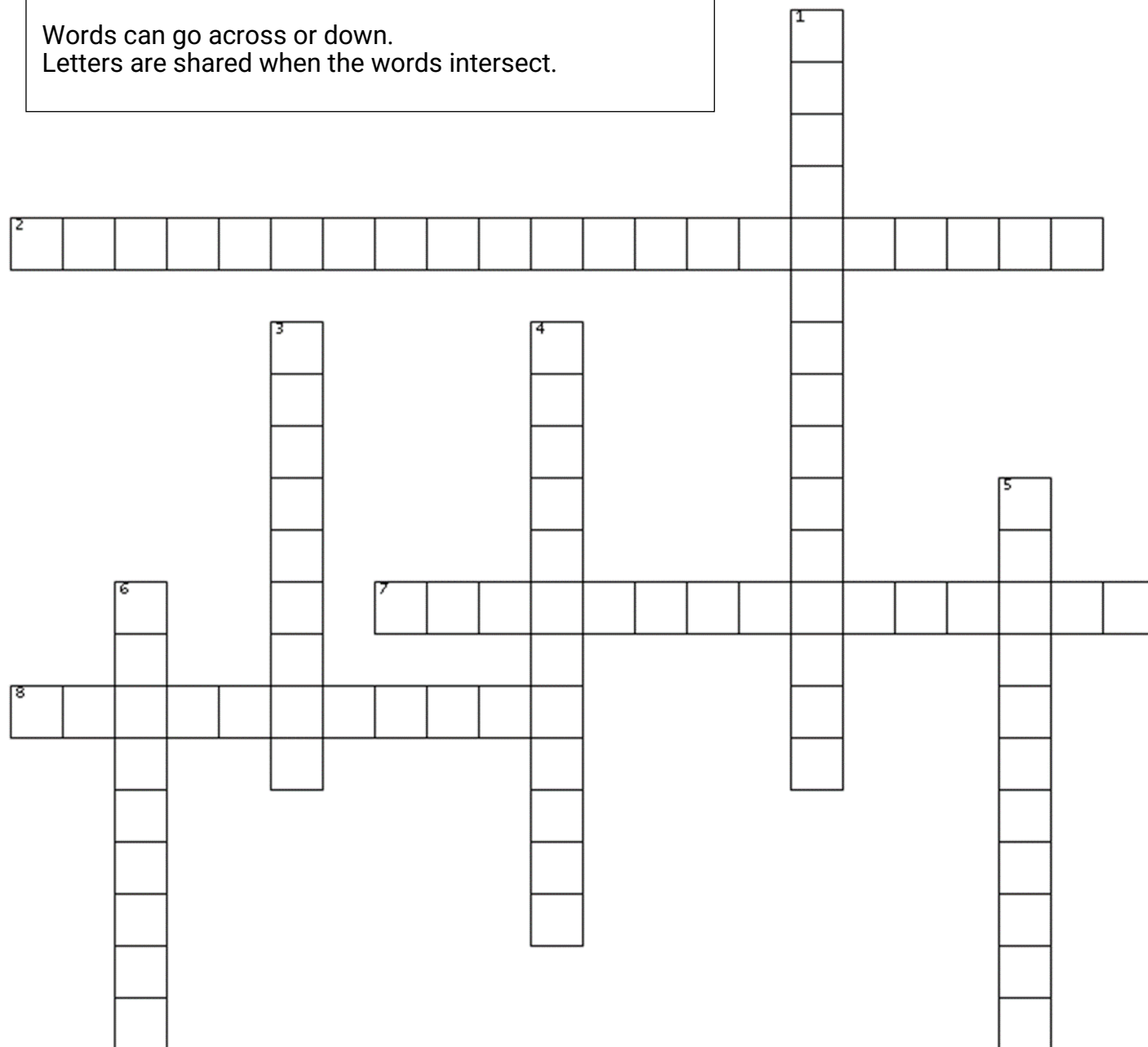


# May: Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month – Lesser Known Facts

By Sophy Theam

Use the clues on the following page to fill in the words.

Words can go across or down.  
Letters are shared when the words intersect.



# May: Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month – Lesser Known Facts (cont'd)

## ACROSS

2. In 1890, the Supreme Court upholds which law in United States v Wong Kim Ark who was born in San Francisco, but after his visit from China, he was denied re-entry because of Chinese exclusion laws?
7. What is the first known incidence of large-scale, organized anti-South Asian violence in the U.S. which occurred in lumber mills against Sikh and Punjab Laborers?
8. Which Chinese American was murdered on the night of his bachelor party in Detroit because he looked Japanese? His white killers didn't spend a day in jail because the judge said, "These are not the kind of men you sent to jail."

## DOWN

1. In 1854, People v Hall determined that Chinese people can't testify against whom?
3. What was the first U.S. state Filipino Americans settled in 1765?
4. Which bill did California pass to prevent "aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning farmland?
5. In 1862, President Lincoln banned which trade which circulated indentured Asian workers to plantations that enslaved Black Africans had worked on?
6. What were Filipino sailors known as from 1765 through the 1800s?

Puzzle was created using: [Criss Cross Puzzle | Discovery Education Puzzlemaker](#)  
Source of Facts: [11 Asian American History Moments to Know for AAPI Month | Time](#)

**Answers can be found at the end of the e-Zine.**



# CARIBBEAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

By Luisa Bedoya

Since 2006, June has been designated as Caribbean American Heritage Month by Presidential Proclamation. The month-long observance promotes the rich culture and heritage of the Caribbean American people and their contributions to the United States of America.

About 90 percent of Caribbean Americans come from five countries: Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. People from this community have not only evolved the American culture, but have also contributed greatly to the nation in the areas of science and medicine. There are also numerous Caribbean Americans whose services the U.S. is grateful for, even today. This month aims to recognize the contributions of all Caribbean-American people and to teach us more about their culture and history.



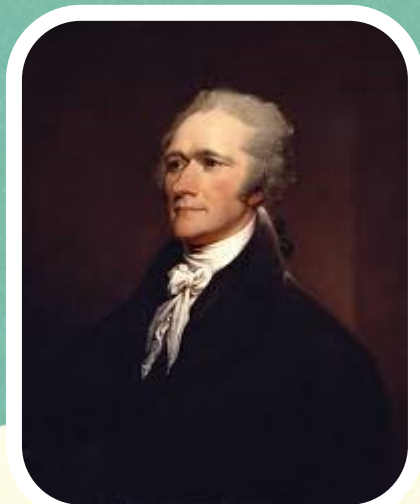
[Caribbean Countries - WorldAtlas](#)

# CARIBBEAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

( CONT ' D )

By Luisa Bedoya

## NOTABLE FIGURES



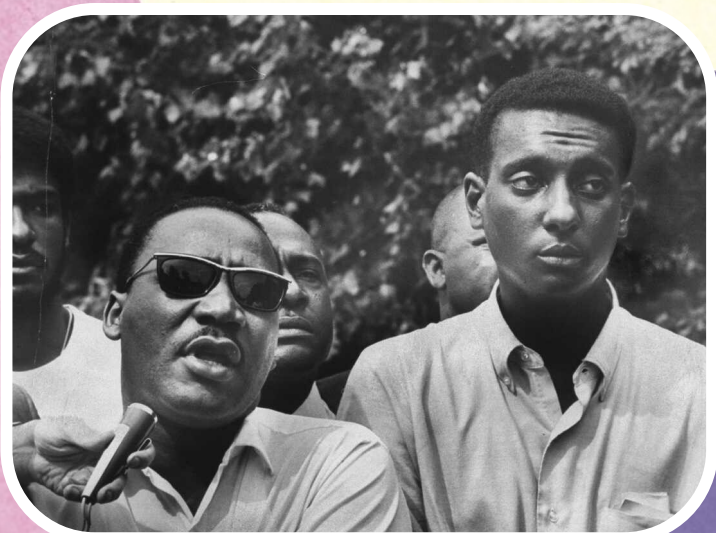
[Alexander Hamilton - Wikipedia](#)

Alexander Hamilton—first Secretary of the Treasury—was born on Nevis, an island in the British West Indies. Though he left as a teenager and never returned, Hamilton’s tragic West Indian childhood informed his entire life, shaping his views on government, economics, slavery, and much more.

Celia Cruz, the world-renowned “Queen of Salsa” music, was born in the Santos Suarez neighborhood of Havana, Cuba. She was influenced by the diverse musical environment of Cuba in the 1930s. Cruz worked as a solo artist, finding her voice with salsa music. During her career, she made 37 studio albums and numerous live albums and collaborations, winning many prizes and awards that included two Grammys and three Latin Grammys.



[Grammys 2016: Celia Cruz Honored With Lifetime Achievement Award 13 Years After Death \(latintimes.com\)](#)



Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael) was from Trinidad and Tobago and played a major role as an activist in the Civil Rights Movement and global Pan African movement. It was Ture who originated the rallying slogan, “black power,” in the 1960s.

[Stokely Carmichael, A Philosopher Behind The Black Power Movement : Code Switch : NPR](#)

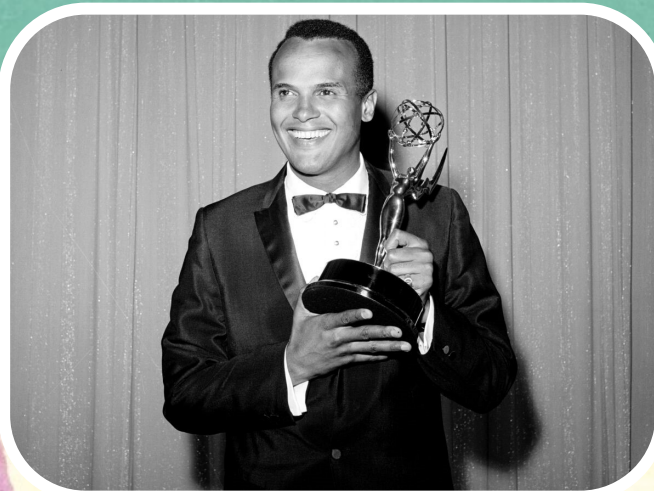


# CARIBBEAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

( CONT ' D )

By Luisa Bedoya

Shirely Chisholm, the daughter of a Barbadian mother and a Guyanese father, was the first African American woman in Congress (1968) and the first woman and African American to seek the nomination for president of the United States from one of the two major political parties (1972).



Harry Belafonte: Singer, activist and first Black Emmy winner - Los Angeles Times ([latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com))

Harry Belafonte, the son of Jamaican-born parents Harold George Bellanfanti Sr.—who worked as a chef—and Melvine (née Love)—a housekeeper—is a singer, activist, and actor. As arguably the most successful Caribbean-American pop star, he popularized the Trinbagonian Calypso musical style with an international audience in the 1950s. His breakthrough album Calypso (1956) was the first million-selling LP by a single artist.

BRING **U.S.** TOGETHER



VOTE **CHISHOLM** 1972  
UNBOUGHT AND UNBOSSSED



Cicely Tyson | 2021 ALA Midwinter

Cicely Tyson, of Nevisian descent, was an actress and former fashion model whose acting career has spanned more than six decades. Her acclaimed work won three Primetime Emmys, a Tony Award, and an honorary Academy Award, among other accolades.

Sources:

The West Indian Island That Shaped Alexander Hamilton - The New York Times ([nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com))

Since 2006, June has been designated as Caribbean American Heritage Month by Presidential Proclamation. The month-long observance promotes the rich culture and heritage of - Google Search

[caribbean american \(doi.gov\)](https://doi.gov)  
Caribbean Spirit — Google Arts & Culture



# June 20: World Refugee Day

By Sophy Theam

June 20 is international World Refugee Day, as designated by the United Nations to honor refugees around the globe. I chose to write this article because, as many of you may know, I came to the United States as a refugee from Cambodia.

Some people are still unclear about the definition of a refugee. My definition is: a person who is seeking asylum in another country because of the fear of being unjustly persecuted or killed in their own country. In my case, in addition to living under the atrocious conditions of slave labor camps during the Khmer Rouge regime, once the Vietnamese invaded the country in January 1979, my family was running for our lives for fear that we would be killed by our very own countrymen or Vietnamese soldiers. We fled our country on foot, and if we were lucky, we may have had an oxcart to ride on, but that was quite rare.

**How did refugees know where the refugee camps were located?** I suppose the adults must have had a general idea where the border to Thailand was through their travels, or they followed others who may have known. They certainly didn't want to run in the direction of where the Vietnamese were invading from in the south and southeast, so many fled west or northwest.

**How many refugee camps were there along the Thai-Khmer border?** I am not really sure how many existed, but I have heard my parents talking about us going through Khao-I-Dang, which some have called a refugee transit center, Chumrum Jas (or "Old Camp") Chumrum Tmey (or "New Camp"—the official name is Nong Samet), Nong Chan, Sakeo I and Sakeo II, Mairut, Phanatnikom, and Chonburi.



**Who established the refugee camps?** The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), also known as the UN Refugee Agency, was created in 1950 to help millions of Europeans who had fled or lost their homes during World War II. "UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting lives, and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities, and stateless people" ([UNHCR - About Us](#)). I recall seeing the UNHCR logo in the camps and on the vinyl tote bags that were given to us for our family's belongings. Later on, I learned that the Red Cross had also been there to provide medical treatment.

**What was your journey like as a refugee?** Being quite young—around 4 or 5 years of age—I really can't remember the "walk" from the Khmer (Cambodian) labor camps to the border. Our mom tells us it took about ten days on foot, and that I had been kidnapped for a day by a couple who couldn't have their own children. Miraculously, my dad was able to find me in one of the villages leading to the border. My mom (who had just given birth by my sister about a month before the journey) was resourceful. Even after we left the labor camps, she would barter the gold jewelry she hid in her clothes for cans of rice just so we could survive. By the time we got to the refugee camps, she had no valuables left.

# June 20: World Refugee Day

(cont'd)

By Sophy Theam

I remember Mom growing vegetables (Chinese watergrass) in a little plot of land behind our “shack.” I don’t have too many memories of the refugee camp days, but I can clearly “see” the old newspaper “boats” that we made to hold the greens so we could sell them at the market. I vaguely recall pulling some sort of a wagon to collect our food rations which consisted of some rice, some canned sardines (if we’re lucky), and if we hit the jackpot, my parents would say, half a chicken for our family! I don’t remember getting any vegetables, but do remember that we grew some veggies for ourselves. My youngest sister was born in Khao-I-Dang as the only one of the three of us who was delivered in a “hospital”— probably of the Red Cross—and who had a real birthdate.

**Who sponsored your family to come to the United States?** We had lived in various refugee camps for over three years when by the time we were finally sponsored by a Lutheran church in Connecticut. Our application was processed in Khao-I-Dang, and since we were selected to go to the United States, our family was sent to the Philippine Refugee Processing Center near Morong, a sea village. I can’t remember at all if we had ridden a plane to the Philippines, but I vaguely remember the bus ride up and down the slopy mountains to get to the “camp.”

I was probably around seven or eight years old, and recalled that life in the Philippines was much more “free” and fun than in Thailand. Our new “home” felt much bigger than the shack in Khao-I-Dang. Even though it still consisted of only one room, I think the shack we stayed in while in the Philippines had higher ceilings (made of straw, or maybe palm leaves). I remember we (along with many others) played a lot in a nearby river which contained lots of stones and waterfalls. Our mom would trade our food rations (rice mostly) for goods from some hill tribes who would come down to the camp periodically. At the sea, I remember eating balut (Philippines) or “pong-tea koan” (Khmer)—duck eggs that have a fertilized, developing egg embryo that is boiled or steamed and eaten from the shell with a sauce consisting of salt, black pepper, and lime juice! We still eat it as a treat once in a while here in the U.S.!

Refugees who were accepted to go to the United States were sent to the Philippines for one reason—to learn English and learn the basics of what life is like in the U.S. (Essentially assimilation into American life.). This was where I learned my ABCs and some words through a picture book. However, I wasn’t prepared for when we finally arrived in the U.S.—people were saying, “Hi!” versus “Hello, how are you? I’m fine, thank you!” It took me a while to understand that folks in the U.S. use “hi” way more than “hello.”

We stayed in the Philippines for approximately six to eight months before we were deemed “ready” to fly to the United States. I must have slept a lot during the plane ride as I can’t remember any of it.

# June 20: World Refugee Day

## (cont'd)

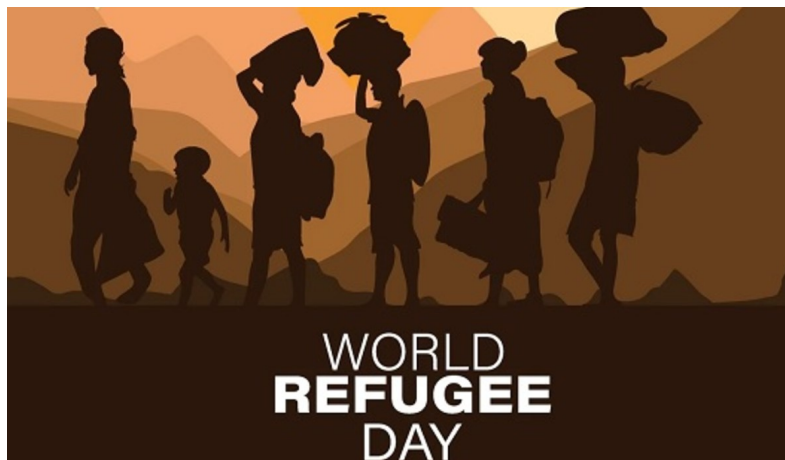
By Sophy Theam

On July 30, 1984, we were greeted by some white Americans (our sponsors) and at least one Khmer person at the airport. I can't say much about our ride to our new "home"—it may have been dark by then. However, once we got to the home, which had been a Parishioner's house converted to a home for refugee families, I can imagine that we were probably awed by the size of the house—it had separate rooms for the kitchen, living room, dining room, bedrooms (that we shared), and a covered three-season porch! Even though this four-bedroom home housed up to 20 people at any given time, it was our first home in the United States. This place marked the beginning of a new life in a new world.

We are so grateful for our sponsors, who did not know who we were prior to "selecting" us. They clothed us, ensured we had money for food (which I learned that the family who came before us had cheated us a few times), got my parents jobs, and introduced us to volunteerism and "retreats" which allowed us to travel and stay at places we otherwise would not have been able to go on our own back then (New York City, Block Island, etc.).

Contrary to the views that some hold of immigrants or refugees being "freeloaders," both our parents worked in factories (two or three jobs at a time) to support us through public schools and college. Imagine my anger when some students in college accused me (and other students of color) getting into college on a "free ride." But that's another story to tell.

There were definitely some bitter moments living amongst other refugee families in the same house. However, our family's alternative to coming to the U.S. as refugees may have been a lot more bitter if we had been forced to continue to live in the refugee camps until 1993, as some people had to, or if we had been forced to return to Cambodia with no possession or property to call home.



[Secretary-General's message on World Refugee Day | MINURSO \(unmissions.org\)](#)



# May: Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month – Lesser Known Facts ANSWERS



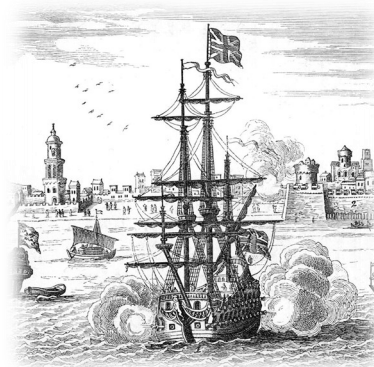
[Who Is Vincent Chin? The History and Relevance of a 1982 Killing \(nbcnews.com\)](http://nbcnews.com)

## ACROSS

- 2. Birthright Citizenship
- 7. Bellingham Riots
- 8. Vincent Chin

## DOWN

- 1. White defendants
- 3. Louisiana
- 4. Alien Land Act
- 5. Coolie Trade
- 6. Manilamen



[The First Asian American Settlement Was Established by Filipino Fishermen \(history.com\)](http://history.com)



THE TWO HUNDRED HINDU PRISONERS: The room in which they were confined by the mob during the night

Photo source: Colliers, Sept. 28, 1907. Caption from Dodd, W.D. "The Hindu in the Northwest." *World Today*, vol. 13, 1907.



**We wish a joyous celebration and a happy, healthy, and prosperous new year**

to our friends from the countries of Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Laos, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

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