

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

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Introducing the April–June 2022 DEI eZine

It is early April and just a little over two years since COVID-19 forced us to work and live in a pandemic mode. We had to wear masks indoors and outside. If we were privileged, we worked from home, fearing that a lack of space might cause us to infect others. Schools shut down; students quickly became remote learners. And toilet paper was a scarce resource! It was a wild and chaotic time for all. For many, the top fear was the food shortages due to supply chain problems.

For those who had a roof over our head, we were the fortunate ones. For those who were living in cramped spaces, the risk of getting infected was high. And then I thought about those who were homeless. Those who may be living alone. Elders and the disabled had challenges getting their necessities. Those who lost loved ones to COVID-19 or violence. In many ways, I am fortunate. I have a job, a house, a family who live with me, children to make my days lively, to say the least, even when I am down and sick. And miraculously, no one in our household has contracted COVID yet.

In addition to the pandemic, the fight for social and racial equity and justice surged to the forefront and at times exploded like an erupting volcano. It crushed many who were hurt, frustrated, and sad to see that voluminous injustices were happening in this “free” country, especially to people of color and those who have been marginalized for centuries. Below is a timeline of the significant racial and social justice events and movements that happened during this double pandemic.

March 13, 2020	Breonna Taylor was shot in her apartment, after a group of at least seven police officers forced entry into the apartment, ostensibly for a drug search. Taylor and her boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, were both sleeping. Taylor was unarmed and shot eight times.
May 25, 2020	George Floyd was arrested for allegedly using a counterfeit bill. Video footage showed one of the police officers kneeling on Floyd’s neck as he was pinned on the ground, saying over and over that he could not breathe. This sparked protests throughout the U.S. and other countries throughout the world about systemic racism, and police violence.
March 16, 2021	Eight people were killed at three Atlanta, Georgia spas, prompting many Asians and Asian-American communities to be on high alert. Many vigils were organized to remember the deceased, bring solidarity, and to speak up against Asian hate-crimes.
April 11, 2021	Dante Wright was killed by police officer Kimberly Potter during a traffic stop and attempted arrest. After struggling to arrest Mr. Wright, Potter shot him in the chest. This situation sparked nights of protest in Brooklyn center.

Sources:

[2020 Events - HISTORY;](#)

[George Floyd’s death anniversary: A timeline capturing key events | World News, The Indian Express;](#)

[Georgia massage parlor shootings leave eight dead; man captured - ABC News \(go.com\);](#)

[Atlanta Shootings: What to Know - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\);](#)

[A year after the Atlanta killings, a path forward for Asian Americans - The Boston Globe](#)

Life started to get better. Vaccines and boosters became available to those who decided to or who could take them to protect themselves and their loved ones. Mask mandates were slowly being lifted from indoor spaces. The coronavirus cases were the lowest in a long time. There were a few wins in the racial justice arena. People were slowly starting to take vacations in places farther from home. Then, Russia decided to invade Ukraine. On Thursday, February 24, 2022. And start a war.

This war elicited a range of emotions including those who did not think a war like this could happen in this day and age. Some know that acts of aggression have been happening all over the world, although they have not received as much coverage. For me, as a “Khmer genocide baby,” I just felt sadness, heartbroken that there is another war that will take away more lives or displace children and adults from their homes and families. My mind also went to how my husband was forced to become a child soldier during a war and was fortunately adopted by White American parents who treated him as their own. Those White American parents had ties to Ukraine, by way of their ethnic descent and I thought about how small the world is after all.

But all in all, I do have to be grateful for everything that I do have. As April sets in, so will warmer temperatures and longer, sunnier days! I’m looking forward to our upcoming road trip to Orlando during April school vacation and our visits to beaches and lakes, ponds and the ocean in the summer! I am anticipating spending more time outside, breathing the natural air during the weekends, and reconnecting with family and friends we haven’t seen much or at all! When all is said and done, I do have a lot to be thankful for, and for that, I am grateful.

Thank you,

Sophy Theam, DEI & Leadership Program Specialist



Member
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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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OLDER AMERICANS MONTH



AGE MY WAY: MAY 2022

Every May, since the Jimmy Carter presidency, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) leads the nation's observance of Older Americans Month (OAM).

In May 2022, ACL is focusing on aging in place – how older adults can plan to stay in their homes and live independently in their communities for as long as possible.

(<https://acl.gov/oam/2022/older-americans-month-2022>)

For close to 40 years, Sandra Wilson worked at First Bank with Mr. Redstone and then with Mr. Duncan at Enterprise Bank, staffing and managing the Billerica branches. She retired on Valentine's Day in 2015. After a life in Chelmsford (her family resided on the same street as Jack Clancy), she moved to Provincetown, to be closer to her sister on Martha's Vineyard and to the beaches and the water. She first roomed with friends for six months and then purchased a 55+ condo.

Sandi got a part-time job, at Boston Harbor Cruises, greeting visitors and doing ticket sales, until the pandemic sharply reduced the customer count. "People were afraid to go out, even masked and six feet apart," she said. "You have to get people out and doing at an age when it's easy to be isolated." On the executive committee in her condo association, as an unofficial activities director, she organizes knitting groups, bridge and poker games, and movie nights. At Provincetown Library, she reads children's stories.

Now 78, Sandi lives next door to a former Rockette, who at 99, had been spending more and more time alone. "Enterprise Bank made me a leader," she said. "Deep down inside, I am shy. But I have empathy and the desire to make people's dreams come true." As treasurer on the Residents Association Executive Committee (RAEC), she and the team got their 20-person bus fixed so that they could get people up and out.

Her own activities include watercolor painting, reading, crafting, watching building and cooking shows on HG TV. And visiting her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren in Milton and Tewksbury. Recently, she's been volunteering to paint nails. Aging her way, independently, in her condo, is facilitated by the next-door Seashore Point Wellness Center, a 41-unit nursing facility, which provides a range of care. Speaking of which, Sandi and the RAEC organized a condo-owner, dress-your-pets for Halloween activity, which was a huge hit with the Wellness patients.

"Thoughts of retirement include traveling and visiting friends, which was not possible, over the past two years," Sandi says. "Now the whales are breaching, which is wonderful. It's the water and the sun that sustains me as I continue to age my way."

Ken Lavallee

Thanks for reaching out. A request to contribute to the DEI eZine makes me appreciate once again, what a great place Enterprise Bank is to work! I sure miss the culture and my colleagues but enjoy seeing some of them when I visit the Drum Hill and Dracut branches or grab a bite to eat with Prema, Nicole, and Julia! I think the best way to **Age in Place** is to not age in place at all! I am attempting to accomplish that by going on long walks with Sophie every day and eating less ice cream!

I hope it works!

(former Assistant Vice President)

Charlie LaRock

Until August 2019, I lived in the house that I grew up in. This was my home in Chelmsford for 69 years. The last two years at this home, I lived alone. I came to the realization that it made no sense to stay in a seven-room home by myself. A condominium would be a much better option to spend my senior years. I was fortunate to find a nice garden style condo in a Chelmsford complex that was familiar to me. My new condo home is only one and a half miles from my previous home of 69 years. My building has a garage. We also have an elevator should the day ever come when I cannot walk the stairs. There is no shoveling of snow and no longer do I have to mow and rake the grass. For me, moving to my new condo home will allow me to

Age in Place.

(former Data Center Specialist)

Cheryl Conlin

One of Cheryl Conlin's favorite things about her job was conducting new employee orientation and training sessions. "I got to know everyone who worked at the bank. It was the best." Starting out in mortgage, then to credit and compliance, prior to moving to HR, she spent 22 years at the Bank, retiring on January 1, 2016. The Lowell resident has lived with her cousin Doris Hubert (still at EB), since 2013. They bought a stair lift for their condo unit, where they don't have to worry about yard work or maintenance. They divide the laundry and grocery tasks: Doris shops; Cheryl puts the groceries away. Doris does the wash; Cheryl folds the clothes. Each plays to their strengths. "I now have handicap parking on the street, right outside the door." With no plans to move, she plans to **Age in Place**. When it snows, not her favorite weather, she can move her car to a Lowell parking garage. Her son, daughter and brother are supportive. While the bank was the "best job of my life and I miss some great people, including Sophy, I don't miss the schedule constraint of going to work every day," she says. "I have some joint issues which sometimes limits my activities. I like the freedom of I'll do it tomorrow." She continues, "People are nice to seniors and often let me go first in line or hold the door. The world is better than people make it out to be." Her retirement features reading (she calls herself a huge history buff) and she loves to color. The last two years have taken its toll. She used to be active in church and counted the offering once a month. Recently, she went back on as steward on the church board now that Zoom meetings are in place. Choir is just starting to come back; Cheryl is a soprano. There is a cat in the place, who cries all day long once Doris goes to work; she is not sure of her voice type!

(former Human Resources Assistant)

compiled and written by Katherine Blake

After Seeding Start-Ups, No Interest in Slowing Down

During his 54-year career, Ray LaFond lived through six mergers and acquisitions, as the banking industry transitioned to remain competitive during an era of globalization. For about 30 months, he met and talked with George Duncan, turning down a succession of job offers. Finally, working at a strong community bank with highly respected leadership (George, Dick Main, Jack Clancy, and board member, Ken Ansin) became very compelling. So Ray called George — on Christmas Eve 2000 — to say yes.

Over two decades at Enterprise Bank, Ray managed and led the commercial lending team and served as commercial lending manager for North Central Massachusetts. He retired at 74 on June 25, 2021, after working part-time for Brian Bullock for several years, the last one-and-a-half, from home.

He misses interaction with customers and the warm, caring culture and staff. “I loved doing start-ups, watching them successfully grow,” recalls Ray. His favorite commercial start-up loan was to Wachusett Brewery, founded by three WPI graduates, who “cast off from their careers in engineering and biology to pursue their passion to make great beer,” according to their website. “The brewery is very successful and going strong,” says Ray.

What does he do during retirement? “Anything I want.” He gardens vegetables, fishes, hunts, and reads. As social and service oriented as ever, he serves on the Capital Campaign Committee of Heywood Hospital, on the Advisory Board for North Central Mass for the Bank and on the Foundation Board for Mount Wachusett Community College. He also devotes hours to the church parish council, the North Central Mass Chamber of Commerce Development and Loan Committee, the Gardner Redevelopment Committee, and the Legislative Affairs Committee of the Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce. For the past 42 years, Ray has served on the Gardner Zoning Board of Appeals.

Ray and his wife, Linda, who after raising their three daughters, went into the banking industry before becoming a school system paraprofessional, are aging in place, in their way, for as long as they can. “We can take care of the house and yard, with no problem. We enjoy spending precious time with our four grandchildren, ages 7 to 19, sharing good times, supporting them, loving them, and teaching them about life’s journey.”

“Your priorities change as you get older,” Ray says. “It’s important to stay active. Do a bit of exercise. Serve as a mentor. Enjoy, smile and be happy every day. Be thankful for what you have. We are blessed in this country. Don’t complain about the price of gas. We have a roof over our head, are warm and fed, and strive to make the best of every day.”

Ray strongly believes that if Enterprise wants to be last community bank standing, it has a great opportunity, with its footprint, customer base, and a strong, committed leadership team — matched by its major asset — its employees. And he continues to stop in to the bank periodically. To visit with his second family.

by Katherine Blake

CELEBRATE THE FREEDOM TO LOVE

Being a member of the LGBT community is an amazing reward, often accompanied by a fear of being judged. And in the worse cases, violence. Many members of this community have faced backlash for whom they love, their gender identity or trying to figure out where they belong. This backlash may often turn towards hate and violence. That's why on May 17, we recognize the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia.

Created in 2004 and celebrated for the first time a year later in 2005, the goal of the holiday is to raise awareness about violence, repression, and discrimination of the LGBTQ+ people. Common activities held on May 17 are marches, parades, festivals, and arts and culture-based events. Since 2021, this holiday has been recognized in more than 130 countries and 100s of events will be held this year. Government officials like the Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, have come out and recognized the value of this holiday. He stated that Canada is dedicated to "legislation to fully protect gender identity and expression."

I am a member of the LGBTQ+ community. I identify as bisexual and I use the pronouns She/They. I have been a victim of hate and violence due to my sexuality. I have faced backlash online for coming out as bisexual and supporting my community.

But the worst type of hate has happened to me in real life. A few years ago, I met a man on a dating app. I hadn't fully come out yet and only told a few people about my sexuality. Once we met to go out to eat and we got along very well. I felt comfortable enough to tell him who I truly am. He did not like that I was bisexual. He felt that I tricked him and he made it clear he didn't support my community. When I began to leave after hearing this, he grabbed my arm and called me a few slurs. He told me that I would never truly be accepted and that I was a confused little girl. He made it clear not to contact him and I didn't.

After living through this experience, it did make me question who I am and if people will treat me with respect. But I was able to educate myself on LGBTQ+ hate and found out about this holiday. I found many people who faced the same hate I did and felt closer to my community.

The international day against homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia is a much-needed holiday. It not only reminds us of what hate the LGBTQ+ faces but also how we can stop this hate. This holiday truly united the community and the allies around us. ~ Megan Pardoe

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“Excelsior!” and “Sorry, I Got Caught Up in The Moment.”

APRIL IS AUTISM MONTH

Kira Morehouse’s eldest daughter loves her two cats, **Stan Lee** and **Salem**, because felines are self-sufficient, fascinating, and they exist to make themselves comfortable. Recently diagnosed on the spectrum, she hasn’t told some of her friends, as she “doesn’t want to be treated like a puppy.”

Living through the pandemic was very, very, very hard. Kira lost three family members. A silver lining was the up-front opportunity to view her two daughters, who were struggling during virtual schooling. Kira started noticing that her daughter, 14, was not in touch with her feelings nor hunger cues. She was always tired, developed a severe

eating disorder, and started withholding food. Wearing baggy clothes, self-isolating: “We didn’t realize how thin she was, 5’9”, 104 pounds, suffering from anorexia.”

She displayed mental health issues, obsessive compulsive and eating disorders, along with social anxiety. “We personified parental panic.

And, we are learning new terms; we will be learning them for the rest of our lives.”

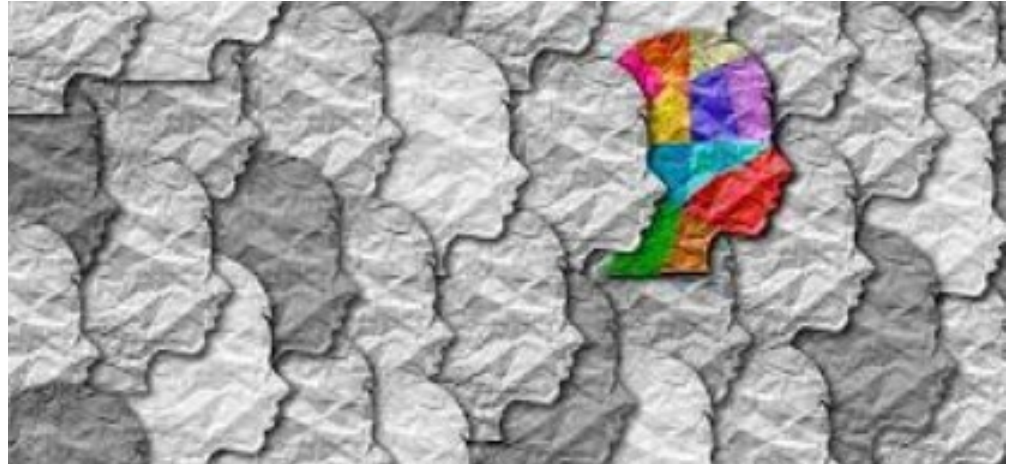


Photo by Deccan Herald on Unsplash

“I would see other parents and children who would be on the spectrum in my community,” says Enterprise Bank’s senior digital marketing specialist and assistant vice president. “My original perception was that it was something that you would notice more.” Learning its manifestations is sometimes more subtle; it is not a non-neurotypical occurrence that has only existed since the 1980s. In light of the new developments and information their family is now learning about Autism Spectrum Disorder through their daughter being recently diagnosed, there is speculation about others in previous generations who may also be on the spectrum but have gone undiagnosed due to lack of awareness about this condition.

Following nine months on the waiting list, while their daughter struggled with ADD (attention deficit disorder), trying to pay attention and be interested in various topics, she was diagnosed with interoceptive awareness disorder and alexithymia: an inability to describe emotions. “Putting her feelings into words was a hard task, as was identifying emotions, and so was asking for help,” says Kira. “Delayed processing, not able to multitask, only able to focus on one thing at a time, were other aspects of the diagnosis.”

***Stan Lee, of Marvel Comics, a comic book writer, editor, publisher, and producer, once said, “Let’s lay it right on the line. Bigotry and racism are among the deadliest social ills plaguing the world today. But, unlike a team of costumed super-villains, they can’t be halted with a punch in the snoot, or a zap from a ray gun. The only way to destroy them is to expose them — to reveal them for the insidious evils they really are.”**

***Salem is a 500-year-old witch, who was sentenced to spend 100 years as a talking black cat with a brilliant personality, due to his plans to take over the world. Now, he’s forced to be Sabrina’s (The Teenage Witch) companion and follow her adventures, which he isn’t always thrilled about.**

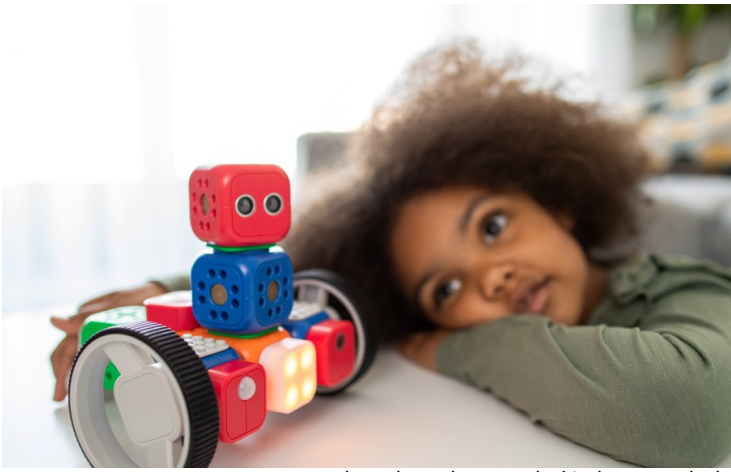


Photo by Robo Wunderkind on Unsplash

Their daughter spent years and years masking and coping to fit in. Kira says, “Others are drawn to her; she is such a cute kid, who then presents with social anxiety, and often withdraws from being around people for too long.” She loves video games, software and hardware design, which is fortunately offered in her school. Her father gifted her with computer parts. Extremely motivated, she researched how to build a PC. And did.

At age nine, her younger social daughter, a Girl Scout, who plays basketball, dances, but is still often observed to be non-verbal and shy, was

assessed in April with selective mutism (a severe anxiety disorder where a person is unable to speak in certain social situations). Customarily a chatterbox when around close family members and friends with whom she is comfortable, she has a hard time using her voice in unfamiliar settings. During a situation at school, when an unknown adult tried to help her, she started to cry. Fortunately, someone she knew came over and sorted it all out.

Kira elaborates, “Before I became aware of family scenarios, I worked for a person who started an allergy-free cookie company who researched autism due to the founder’s son having been diagnosed early as being on the autism spectrum.” Through this work experience, Kira learned that there are studies that make connections with how more and more genetically modified organisms in our food play into an increased occurrence of food allergies. For many families who have children diagnosed as being on the spectrum, autism and food allergies go together. However, at the time of learning all of this initially, Kira had no idea that this scenario would play out in my own family being affected. “Ultimately, autism has likely always existed; it is now experiencing a greater visibility due to more dedicated learning and research.”

“Autism is not what is always depicted in the media,” she continues. “All instances are unique; it is not a mental health issue; some brains are differently wired. And at work, not everybody is going to function in the same way; the workplace needs to adapt to different styles.”

Additional resources are needed in school. Every year, many students struggle with something. ADD is a common diagnosis. It is not the teacher’s job to diagnose, although teachers have helpful observations. More resources are needed for middle school students to help them to find tools and be more self-aware.

Helpful resources include Speech Therapy. Counseling. Occupational Therapy. Becoming more self-aware physically. Learning how to develop Emotional Intelligence. Developing an ability to identify feelings.

“I would rather deal with these issues now,” Kira says, “than have my daughters fall through the cracks and self-medicate later.” **“Nuff said.”** and **“I Need A Little Fresh Air And A Latte.”**

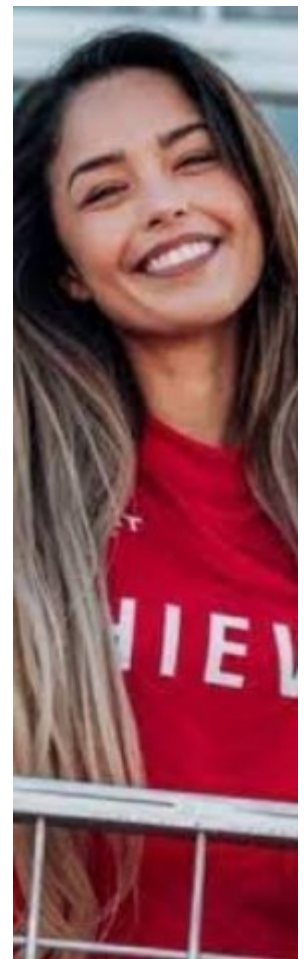
By Katherine Blake and Kira Morehouse



Photo by Tomáš Petz on Unsplash



WOMEN IN GAMING: THE RISE OF VALKYRAE



www.essentiallysports.com

Photo by Jeff Hardi on Unsplash Online she's known as Valkyrae, "Rae" for short. Her real name is Rachell Hofstetter, a half Filipina and German female streamer. She is one of the top Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) creators. She exclusively streams her content on YouTube and re-signed her contract in February 2022.

She was born and raised in Washington state with her younger sister and three older half-brothers. She graduated from a local Washington Community College in 2014 and started a job at GameStop. While working there, she began her online gaming career on Instagram and gathered a large following. Then in 2015, she officially joined Twitch, a streaming platform, and began posting videos on YouTube.

In 2018, she was the first female gamer to join the esports team and content creation management group, 100 Thieves. Her first step to becoming the "Queen of YouTube" began in January 2020 when she signed an official contract to only stream on the platform. Later that year, Rae began to quickly rise in viewership and fame with the game Among Us., which she and other streamers began to play during the start of the pandemic. It made both her friends and the audience feel like they were hanging out together.



Creative Commons:

Celeste screenshot 09.png

Since then, Rae became a co-owner of 100 Thieves, starred in three music videos, and released a cover song with friends. She helped fellow AAPI creators, Fuslie and TinaKitten to join 100 Thieves. Valkyrae also raised the AAPI voice in the gaming industry by playing with others. She has aided the growth of Sykkuno and Disguised Toast, both AAPI streamers. She was named Content Creator of the Year at The Game Awards 2020. According to an April 7, 2021 *New York Times* profile, the deal with 100 Thieves may allow her to balance being a player and a businesswoman.

The NYT article also pointed out that heightened visibility has come with heightened misogyny and harassment, including an incident in January 2021, when Rae was doxxed on Twitter by a stalker who tweeted out her home address. "There is a difference in the verbiage that some trolls will say toward women specifically, that men are never going to hear," she said. Being outspoken about online threats makes her relatable to her streaming audience, which is nearly half girls and young women. "It makes me so happy to be a pioneer and a role model for a lot of women in this industry."

By Megan Pardoe

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Photo by V on Unsplash

RAMADAN MUBARAK

Many of us hear references to Ramadan; however, we may not understand its importance or have developed misconceptions. About a quarter of the world's population is Muslim and Ramadan is observed for a period of four weeks. As the Islamic calendar is based on the lunar cycle, the month of Ramadan rotates by about ten days each year. In 2022, Ramadan begins on Saturday, April 2, based on the sighting of the moon.

Ramadan is broadly known as a month of fasting, yet the time is spent with family and friends, on devotion, reflection, connecting with the physical and spiritual worlds, and reading the Koran, Islam's sacred text. "Ramadan is a call for internal and physical cease-fire" with an emphasis on graciousness, patience, and forgiveness.

The length of the fasting day varies throughout the month of Ramadan due to the increasing daylight. The fast begins at dawn and lasts until dusk and is often broken with *iftar*, an evening meal that typically begins with a sharing of dates, water, and sweet tea followed by nourishing dishes. Before the following sunrise, fasting Muslims eat a meal called *sahur* that contains hydrating and protein-rich foods to sustain them until they break their fasts in the evening. The month of Ramadan concludes with a celebration, *Eid al-Fitr*, where many healthy and delicious foods are shared. Please visit the link below to view recipes for *iftar*, *sahur* and *Eid al-Fitr*. Happy Ramadan!

by Edie Joyce

Sources:

[45 Ramadan Recipes for Iftar, Sahur, and Eid al-Fitr | Epicurious \(ericomcloud.net\)](#)

[The Importance of Ramadan \(forbes.com\)](#)

[Which countries have the 10 largest Christian and Muslim populations? | Pew Research Center](#)

How is Solar New Year Celebrated?

Sophy Theam; Darshika Jain

What's your name and role at the Bank?

Sophy Theam: DEI & Leadership Program Specialist; Darshika Jain: Cash Management Operations Rep II.

What is your ethnic background? I am Khmer; many refer to us as Cambodian. I am Indian.

What part of the country are you and your family from? Battambang Province. Central Madhya Pradesh.

What languages do you speak? Khmer and English. Hindi and English.

When and why did you come to the U.S.? In 1984, as a refugee-seeking asylum. In 2012, my marriage.

What is Solar New Year mostly attributed to in your country? The celebration of culture and a bountiful harvest of crops. The celebration of culture and harvest!

What dates is the New Year celebrated? Both Sophy and Darshika: April 13 to 15 or April 14 to 16.

How is the Solar New Year celebrated? Khmer New Year is a three-day celebration, where the whole nation is closed for work and school. In addition to lots of parties and festive gatherings, the three days are filled with Buddhist ceremonies that focus on expressing gratitude, making offerings to the deceased family members, and donating to those less fortunate. Before the celebrations begin, families have traditionally cleaned their homes and made or purchased new clothes. Every region has a unique way of celebrating the South Asian New Year. In some regions, schools are closed. There are festive gatherings, people make rangolis, prepare sweets and savory food items and start making arrangements for the festivities.

What is the Solar New Year called in your home country? Suosdey Chhnam Tmey (Enter the New Year). Each region has its culture and traditions. Baisakhi — Punjab, Jude Sheetal — Bihar, Jharkhand, Bohag Bihu — North Eastern States, Gudi Padwa — Maharashtra, Ugadi — Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, Vishu — Kerala, Pohela Boishakh — West Bengal.



"Also known as Rangali Bihu, Bohag Bihu also falls on the day of Baisakhi and Puthandu in Assam. Celebrating the new harvest with lots of sweets, shared among the family and friends with the exchange of more gifts. Bohag Bihu is celebrated for three days straight with many different traditions."

[9 New Years and Harvest Festivals Celebrated In India \(ericomcloud.net\)](https://ericomcloud.net)

Photo: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bihu3.jpg>

How is Solar New Year Celebrated? (cont'd)

Sophy Theam; Darshika Jain

How do you celebrate the Solar New Year in the United States? Pre-pandemic, we would attend KNY festivals, organized by local groups, and if possible, go to the temples to make offerings to our deceased family members, make donations to the monks and nuns who live at the temple, and participate in (or observe) any traditional games that's being played — normally by young people who could be courting each other, or watch traditional dance and music performances. Pre-pandemic, we would attend Color festivals organized by local groups/temples/organization, and if possible, go to the temple.

What are the highlights for you during these celebrations? Being a 1.5 generation Khmer person, truthfully, it has been awkward for me to participate but I do love observing all the fun that goes on at the celebrations. I enjoy the social dances though, which happen outside in a festival setting or inside a banquet hall! Playing colors, different deserts, family time.

What's your favorite food and/or dessert during this celebration? Oh gosh, what's not to like? I love the desserts the most — especially the bananas wrapped in sticky rice and the triangle "nom goam" which is made of glutinous rice flour and has sweet coconut and sesame filling. Desserts.

What's your most memorable moment while celebrating Solar New Year? I guess the most memorable was when our family joined the KNY celebration at Clemente Park in Lowell and my (then four-year-old) daughter participated in a tug of war contest — males against females and she was wearing a traditional cotton krama and her team won! She was so happy! Surrounded with family and friends.

Anything else you'd like to share on this celebration? Khmer New Year is the most important celebration in Khmer culture. I think if we can take three days off of work to truly celebrate like they do in Cambodia, that would be such a great thing! That way we can teach our children and other young ones this aspect of our culture which is colorful, lively, and fun and worth passing down from generation to generation! This is one of the most important celebration in Indian culture. Every region celebrates it in their own way and with its particular focus.



Enterprise Bank to Observe Juneteenth Independence Day on Monday, June 20

All branches and offices of Enterprise Bank will be closed on **Monday, June 20**, in observance of **Juneteenth Independence Day**, a recognized state holiday in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and State of New Hampshire.

In his proclamation of **June 19, 2020** declaring Juneteenth an annual state holiday, **Massachusetts** Governor Charlie Baker said, “Juneteenth is a chance for us all to reflect on this country’s painful history of slavery and the systemic impact that racial injustice continues to have today. It is also an opportunity to recommit to the goal of creating a more equal and just society.” In **2007**, Governor Deval Patrick, the Commonwealth’s first African American governor, declared June 19 as **Juneteenth Independence Day** in Massachusetts, making it the 25th state to officially observe and commemorate the date.



New Hampshire Governor Christopher T. Sununu, in his 2020 official proclamation calling Juneteenth Day to the attention of all citizens, noted **New Hampshire’s** “long history and involvement in the emancipation and abolishment of slavery” that predated the Civil War by many years. Governor Sununu officially recognized Juneteenth as a state holiday in **2019** when he signed into effect Senate Bill 194.

As we continue to learn about the impact of ongoing racism and the greater need for equity and inclusion, we can begin with honoring the history of those who have been denied such acknowledgement until now. History of Juneteenth, a combination of “June” and “Nineteenth,” is also known as Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Liberation Day, and Emancipation Day, and is a holiday celebrating the emancipation of those who had been enslaved in the United States.

President Abraham Lincoln issued the **Emancipation Proclamation** declaring “that all persons held as slaves” within the rebellious states “are, and henceforward shall be free” on **January 1, 1863**. It took 2.5 years and an announcement by Union Army general Gordon Granger **on June 19, 1865** proclaiming freedom from slavery in Texas, before **the enslaved people of Texas learned they were freed**.

Juneteenth celebrations date to 1866 and primarily involved church-centered community gatherings in Texas. By the 1920s and 1930s, recognition of the date had spread across the South and often centered on a food festival. **By 2020, 47 states recognized the date**, and activists were campaigning for the U.S. Congress to recognize Juneteenth as a national holiday. Modern Juneteenth celebrations tend to be local events that include public readings of the Emancipation Proclamation and works by African-American writers including Ralph Ellison and Maya Angelou and the singing of traditional songs such as “Lift Every Voice and Sing.”

We encourage everyone to support local organizations and Juneteenth observances for resources and celebratory events, including the following:

- Explore Lowell’s Black history through art and interpretation with Visit Downtown Lowell’s Visualize Lowell’s Black History program. Learn more at <https://www.visitdtl.com/vlbh/>
- The Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire promotes awareness and appreciation of African American history and life to build more inclusive communities today. Learn more at [https:// blackheritagetrailnh.org](https://blackheritagetrailnh.org)
- Merrimack Valley Black and Brown Voices, Inc., provides Black and Brown people with a safe space to connect, share resources, and create systemic change in our cities/towns for Black and Brown people to live and thrive. Learn more at <https://www.facebook.com/mvbbvoices/>

We expect to share more resources and events as they become available. Tune into our DEI Page on eSource and social media pages for updates (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn.)

by Tammy Dohner and Kira Morehouse

The Link Between DEI and Wellness

quotes are from Sona Pancholy, president of Meritas
[linkedin.com/pulse/link-between-dei-wellness-sona-pancholy](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/link-between-dei-wellness-sona-pancholy)

Treating all employees as valued individuals, recognizing their unique needs, and addressing those needs on a personalized basis helps raise the level of wellbeing across the organization and helps make all employees feel included and appreciated.

Often discussions around DEI do not take into account the close connection between diversity and wellbeing. When employees have a high level of wellbeing and feel safe, secure, and comfortable in their work environment, they are more open to diverse people and thoughts.

Corporate wellness programs and DEI programs often exist in separate silos. But both wellness and DEI initiatives, to be effective, must permeate all aspects of the corporation, and neither is mutually exclusive.

And not only are healthy individuals more inclusive, but inclusive workplaces improve wellbeing for all employees.

Mental Health Awareness Month presents:

“10 Simple Ways to Cope with Stress”

By Malaika Stoll, MD

<https://www.sutterhealth.org/health/mind-body/10-simple-ways-to-cope-with-stress>

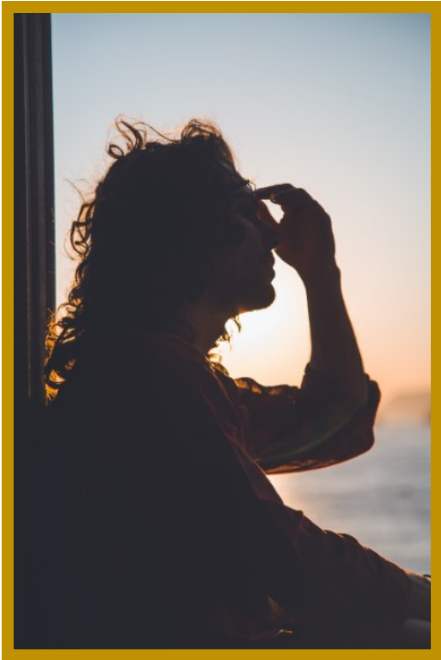


Photo by Matteo Vistocco on Unsplash

When your car dies or a deadline looms, how do you respond? Long-term, low-grade or acute stress takes a serious toll on your body and mind, so don't ignore feelings of constant tension. Understand what's happening inside your body and learn simple coping skills to combat the negative impacts of everyday stressors.

FIGHT OR FLIGHT

Sudden or ongoing stress activates your nervous system and floods your bloodstream with adrenaline and cortisol, two hormones that raise blood pressure, increase heart rate and spike blood sugar. These changes pitch your body into a fight or flight response. That enabled our ancestors to outrun saber-toothed tigers, and it's helpful today for

situations like dodging a car accident. But most modern chronic stressors, such as finances or a challenging relationship, keep your body in that heightened state, which hurts your health.

EFFECTS OF TOO MUCH STRESS

"If constantly under stress, most of us will eventually start to function less well," says Malaika Stoll, MD, chief medical officer of SutterSelect. Multiple studies link chronic stress to a higher risk of heart disease, stroke, depression, weight gain, memory loss and even premature death, so "it's important to recognize the warning signals," she says.

Talk to your doctor about ways to manage stress if you're experiencing any of these symptoms:



Photo by Francisco Moreno on Unsplash

- Prolonged periods of poor sleep
- Regular, severe headaches
- Unexplained weight loss or gain
- Feelings of isolation, withdrawal or worthlessness
- Constant anger and irritability

10 WAYS TO COPE WITH CHRONIC STRESS

"It's key to recognize stressful situations as they occur because it allows you to focus on managing how you react," Dr. Stoll says.

"We all need to know when to close our eyes and take a deep breath when we feel tension rising."

1. RE-BALANCE WORK AND HOME

All work and no play? If you're spending too much time at the office, intentionally put more dates in your calendar to enjoy time for fun, either alone or with others.

2. BUILD IN REGULAR EXERCISE

Moving your body on a regular basis balances the nervous system and increases blood circulation, helping to flush out stress hormones. Even a daily 20-minute walk makes a difference.

3. EAT WELL; LIMIT ALCOHOL AND STIMULANTS

Alcohol, nicotine and caffeine may relieve stress temporarily but have negative health impacts and can make stress worse in the long run. Well-nourished bodies cope better, so start with a good breakfast, add more organic fruits and vegetables, avoid processed foods and sugar, and drink more water.

4. CONNECT WITH SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE

Talking face to face with another person releases hormones that reduce stress. Lean on those good listeners in your life.

5. CARVE OUT HOBBY TIME

Do you enjoy gardening, reading, listening to music or some other creative pursuit? Engage in activities that bring you pleasure and joy; research shows that reduces stress by almost half and lowers your heart rate, too.

6. PRACTICE MEDITATION, STRESS REDUCTION OR YOGA

Relaxation techniques activate a state of restfulness that counterbalances your body's fight-or-flight hormones. Consider taking a mindfulness-based stress reduction course to learn effective, lasting tools.

7. SLEEP ENOUGH

If you get less than seven to eight hours of sleep, your body won't tolerate stress as well as it could. If stress keeps you up at night, address the cause and add extra meditation into your day to make up for the lost z's.

8. BOND WITH YOUR PET

Clinical studies show that spending even a short time with a companion animal can cut anxiety levels almost in half.

9. TAKE A VACATION

Getting away from it all can reset your stress tolerance by increasing your mental and emotional outlook, which makes you a happier, more productive person upon return. Leave your cellphone and laptop at home!

10. SEE A COUNSELOR, COACH OR THERAPIST

If negative thoughts overwhelm your ability to make positive changes, it's time to seek professional help. Make an appointment today—your health and life are worth it.



Photo by Matteo Vistocco on Unsplash

“Realize deeply that the present moment is all you ever have.

Make the now the primary focus of your life.” - Eckhart Tolle

Tai Chi is a slow, gentle, and therapeutic form of exercise, designed to open the flow of body energy for overall mental and physical well-being. That is what I learned in a day-long Brookline Adult Education class some years ago. The start of that day went smoothly. But as the instructor got into more flowing choreographed moves: Picture the pre-school dancer who is pointedly marching in the opposite direction from the row of toddler ballerinas pointing and flexing during the local recital. That was me.

Sholeh Gharib, co-owner of Body & Brain, effectively adapted her basic Tai Chi class to Zoom for an Enterprise Bank class on March 10. “Body & Brain maximizes the benefits from your physical exercise by developing your ability to use mindful breathing and relaxed concentration,” says their website.

The charge was to take the class, but not take too many notes, and chronicle how I was feeling.



Photo by Kabita Darlami on Unsplash

She demonstrated repetitive movements and poses, gentle easy motions. Even the uncoordinated could easily follow along. Over the 60 minutes, we stretched and flexed our neck, shoulders, arms, hands, back, hips, spine, knees, toes and more. We were asked to clear our thoughts and let go of negative stresses. That, however, may take more than an hour.

Zoom lends itself to a meditative, calm, and quiet environment, if one is fortunate enough to be alone in a room. Assumed that the other participants were reflectively quiet and focused on their screens with the cameras turned off. Breathe in; breathe out, deeply and slowly, she said. Sholeh turned her camera up and down and back and forth so that we could more clearly view her demonstrated moves.

At the end of the class, I felt less tight and more flexible and was glad that I had availed myself of the opportunity for some mind/body care. My beloved late brother had rheumatoid arthritis and entered a study, conducted by the instructor who works with the Red Sox players, to look at the impact of a dedicated Tai Chi practice on a chronic illness. Steve met with Rami (<https://www.ramelrones.com/>) weekly for several years, and experienced great relief and lubricated joints. In summary, taking the March Zoom class, I felt a strong spiritual connection to Stephen John Holda, whom I miss every day. In so many ways.

Strive to focus on every moment with each person whom you love. They are here this minute. They may be gone the next. In June 2020, I was talking with a close elder friend. Within the week, she had a heart attack and passed. Tai Chi teaches the spiritual importance of slowing down and paying attention. **by Katherine Blake**