



## People Inc. DEI Calendar: May 2024

### Month-long Observances

#### Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) Month

- ALS is a progressive neurodegenerative disease in which a person's brain loses connection with the muscles, slowly taking away their ability to walk, talk, eat and eventually breathe. Considering the damage ALS can do, it became essential to spread the message regarding the disease so that people could treat it at an early stage. Though there is no cure for ALS, early detection can help in improving the quality of life of those with the disease.
- Each May people come together to raise awareness of the disease, share stories from people living with ALS, show support for caregivers and care workers, as well as shine a spotlight on those who dedicated their lives to finding a cure. More than 5,000 people are diagnosed every year and 10 per cent of cases are inherited through a mutated gene.

#### Asian American, Hawaiian, & Pacific Islander Heritage Month

- Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month originated in 1977. It recognizes the contributions and influence of Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Americans to the history, culture, and achievements of the United States.
- This year, the theme of Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month is "Advancing Leaders through Innovation." This theme will be addressed as a part of an ongoing theme series called Advancing Leaders which began in 2021. Relevant organizations, Universities, and other institutions will also hold programs addressing recurring topics such as intersecting AAPI identities and raising awareness of challenges faced by AAPI communities today.

#### Haitian Heritage Month

- First known to be celebrated in Boston, Massachusetts in 1988, Haitian Heritage Month is a national observance dedicated to celebrating Haitian communities and their culture in the United States. The month of May coincides with Haitian Flag Day on May 18, a major patriotic holiday for those living in the Caribbean Republic of Haiti as well as the Haitian American Diaspora.
- Haitian Heritage Month celebrates Haitian achievements and contributions, both historical and current. The observance also highlights aspects of Haiti's rich culture such as its food, art, music, and other distinct traditions. These cultural aspects and their histories are represented in events such as parades, programs, and exhibits organized by Haitian-led organizations across the country.

#### Jewish-American Heritage Month

- Jewish-American Heritage Month (JAHM) celebrates the history and culture of Jewish people living in the United States, highlighting their contributions to the nation's culture and society. First known to have arrived in New Amsterdam in 1694, Jewish Americans have continuously shaped America's history.
- For JAHM, many organizations across the country will participate in providing the public with programs and resources to highlight and celebrate Jewish Americans. The National Museum of Jewish American History offers a selection of online resources detailing significant Jewish American figures, museum artifacts, and more in relevance to Jewish American history: <https://www.nmajh.org/jewish-american-heritage-month/>

#### Mental Health Awareness Month

- Mental Health Awareness Month is observed to help bring visibility to the millions of Americans currently living with mental health struggles in their daily lives. The activism surrounding this month aims to challenge the historical massive stigma around mental illness that persists today, while providing support for those affected by mental health conditions. Advocating for mental health also means actively fighting for policies that make

mental health support and treatment more accessible to everyone and encourage these individuals to seek help when needed.

- Join the Conversation for resources and a pledge to stop stigma at <https://letstalkstigma.org/>.
- Other resources:
  - Call or text 988
  - <https://www.monroecounty.gov/mh-services>
  - <https://www3.erie.gov/mentalhealth/about-department>
  - <https://www.211wny.org/>
  - <https://www.mhanational.org/>

### **National Speech, Language, and Hearing Month**

- Recognized every May, Better Hearing and Speech Month (BHSM) raises awareness regarding various communication disorders related to hearing or speech. Founded in 1927 as National Hearing Week and expanded to its current name in 1972, BHSM exists as a campaign led by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). One of the major initiatives of BHSM is to spread the word encouraging annual hearing testing. Testing can help identify potential communication issues early on and allows for better response to many treatments available from audiologists and speech-language pathologists.
- This year, the theme of *World Hearing Day* is “Changing Mindsets.” ASHA’s audiologists and speech-language pathologists work to change mindsets every day—in the people they serve, their communication partners, and their community at large. We hope that *World Hearing Day* gives you an opportunity to educate someone on the important work that you do or to let people who are experiencing communication difficulties know where they find help.

### **National Stroke Awareness Month**

- Led by the National Stroke Association until its dissolving in 2019, National Stroke Awareness Month aims to raise awareness regarding the incidence of strokes, their impact on people who suffer strokes, and the actions one should take in the event of a stroke. By encouraging individuals, communities, and health providers to spread the word and share resources regarding strokes, National Stroke Awareness Month advocates for reducing stroke risk factors and acting quickly as a response to a stroke.
- In addition to knowing the signs and symptoms of a stroke, the campaign of National Stroke Awareness Month encourages people to remember the acronym FAST (F for Face Drooping, A for Arm Weakness, S for Speech Difficulty, and T for Time to call 9-1-1) and act accordingly and quickly when these symptoms appear. The month’s campaign is represented by a purple ribbon.

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## **Daily Observations**

### **5/1 – National Interpreter Appreciation Day**

- Observed on the first Wednesday in May, National Interpreter Appreciation Day highlights the efforts of interpreters whose job bridges language barriers in every area of life, including, but not limited to business, health, and entertainment. Starting in 2013, this observance reminds us that a world with thousands of languages requires many more interpreters to connect those with not only differing languages but also differing methods of communication.
- There are about 6,500 languages in the world and on any given day, we are bound to encounter more than one of them. National Interpreter Appreciation Day celebrates the experts who connect those who want to communicate but they don't speak the same language. They also translate for government services, businesses, hospitals, organizations, and more.
- People Inc. acknowledges the presence of interpreters as a critical component of accessibility. This notably applies to American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation allowing for effective communication between those who are Deaf or hard of hearing and hearing individuals.

### **5/5 – African World Heritage Day**

- First declared in 2018 by UNESCO, African World Heritage Day is an observance dedicated to celebrating the unique and rich cultural heritage of Africa. The day was established to draw awareness to African cultural heritage and its potential for driving poverty reduction and regional development throughout the continent.

- According to UNESCO, despite being the second largest continent, Africa is underrepresented on the World Heritage List, accounting for only 12 per cent of the list with 21 registered sites. However, these sites make up 39 per cent of the World Heritage List in Danger, being disproportionately vulnerable. Issues such as climate change and uncontrolled development threaten the preservation of irreplaceable cultural heritage.

#### **5/5 – Cinco de Mayo**

- Cinco de Mayo is not celebrated in Mexico. It is a yearly celebration held on May 5 created by and for Latino communities in the United States, to celebrate Mexico's victory over the second French Empire at the Battle of Puebla in 1862, which plays a significant role in Mexican history. The celebration of Cinco de Mayo is more about U.S. Latino history and culture than Mexican history.

#### **May 5-6 – Yom HaShoah or Holocaust Remembrance Day**

- The internationally recognized date for Holocaust Remembrance Day corresponds to the 27th day of Nisan on the Hebrew calendar and marks the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. It pays tribute to the nearly 11 million people who perished during the Holocaust. This day also honors those who survived the ordeal, whose stories and struggles cannot be forgotten, nor dismissed.

#### **5/19– Global Accessibility Awareness Day**

- Global Accessibility Awareness Day is an awareness day focusing on digital access and inclusion for the more than one billion people alive today who live with disabilities or impairments.

#### **5/19– Malcom X Day**

- Malcolm X Day is an American holiday in honor of civil rights activist Malcolm X that is celebrated on the third Friday of May.
- Malcolm X emerged as the principal spokesperson of the Nation of Islam during the 1950's and 1960's. He organized temples, founded a newspaper, and led Temple No. 7 in New York City's Harlem. Elijah Muhammad appointed him the national representative of Islam. Malcom X became an inspiration for change and equality.

#### **5/19 – Pentecost**

- Pentecost is a Christian holiday which takes place on the 50th day after Easter Sunday. It commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Mary, mother of Jesus, other disciples, and the Apostles of Jesus, after his Ascension, while they were gathered in Jerusalem celebrating the Jewish feast of Pentecost (Shavuot). The Jewish feast is a thanksgiving for the first fruits of the wheat harvest and associated with a remembrance of the Law given by God to Moses. It is believed that the Holy Spirit gave those gathered the ability to speak in foreign tongues and the events of this night marks the beginning of the Christian church's mission to the world.

#### **5/21 – World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development**

- World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development celebrates not only the richness of the world's cultures, but also the essential role of intercultural dialogue for achieving peace and sustainable development.

#### **5/27 – Memorial Day**

- Memorial Day is a federal holiday in the United States for honoring and mourning the U.S. military personnel who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces. From 1868 to 1970, it was observed on May 30. Since 1971, observed on the last Monday of May.