



People Inc. DEI Calendar: March 2024

Month-long Observances

Brain Injury Awareness Month

- Brain Injury Awareness Month, recognized each March, provides an important opportunity to bring attention to the prevention of traumatic brain injury (TBI) and to promote strategies to improve the quality of life for persons living with TBI and their families.
- Falls are a major cause of brain injury, resulting in 40.5% of all TBIs. This places adolescents, young adults, and elderly patients at the highest risk for TBI-related injuries.
- Non-traumatic brain injuries include infectious disease, electric shock, toxic exposure, metabolic disorders, neurotoxic poisoning, lack of oxygen, drug overdose.
- Traumatic brain injuries include car and motorcycle accidents, sports injuries, abusive head trauma, and gunshot wounds.
- Resources associated with Brain Injury Awareness Month:
 - Headway of WNY, an affiliate of People Inc. - <https://www.headwayofwny.org/>
 - Brain Injury Association of America - <https://www.biausa.org/public-affairs/public-awareness/brain-injury-awareness>

Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month

- Symbolized by a **Green ribbon**, Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month is observed to spread awareness of the lifelong condition of cerebral palsy, as well as to celebrate the lives of those who live with it. Cerebral palsy is a neurological condition that affects motor function in areas such as balance, coordination, and movement. How it impacts people varies in type and severity.
- Cerebral palsy remains the most common motor disability in children in the United States, with nearly one million Americans impacted by the condition. Globally, over 17 million people live with cerebral palsy. Continuous work is still needed to improve the lives of those living with cerebral palsy via earlier diagnosis and improved treatments.
- Green was chosen to represent cerebral palsy awareness because it indicates youth and growth. This reflects the ongoing progress towards advancements in treatment and acceptance.

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month (DDAM)

- March is Developmental Disabilities Month, a time when we highlight the many ways in which people with and without disabilities come together to form strong, diverse communities. We invite all employees and people we support to spread awareness with us on social media by sharing out our posts using the hashtags #DDAM2024 and #DisabilityAwareness2024.
- Check out events that we will be participating in on March 6 – Spread the Word: Inclusion and stop by to visit us.
- DDAM is a nationwide event to raise awareness about the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all aspects of community life, and the barriers they still face. The first National DDAM was observed in 1987, following decades of advocacy and efforts to raise awareness about developmental disabilities.
- In New York State, a medical diagnosis of autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, epilepsy, intellectual disability, Prader-Willi syndrome, and other neurological impairment is considered a developmental disability.
- Since 1970, People Inc. has provided support to people with developmental disabilities including housing, day programming, vocational and employment training, advocacy, health care and other community-based services. To learn more, visit <https://www.people-inc.org/>.

- Although considerable progress has been made for the inclusion, acceptance, and support of people with disabilities, there is still much to accomplish. Unemployment continues to remain high for people with disabilities, and the existence of programs that support them are constantly threatened due to underfunding.

Irish American Month

- An annual observance originating in the United States, where it is known as Irish American Heritage Month, it has also received official recognition in Canada. The first Irish American Heritage Month happened in 1991 and continued to be established through Congressional laws and presidential proclamations. 9.2 % of Americans claim Irish heritage.

Women's History Month

- National Women's History Month celebrates the roles and contributions of women to American history. The origins of the official celebration of the month date back to 1981, when Congress passed a resolution to designate a week in March 1982 as Women's History Week. This was a result of successful lobbying efforts to expand a local women's history celebration in Santa Rosa, California to a national scale. This continued annually until 1987, when a petition from the National Women's History Project caused Congress to pass a resolution designating March as Women's History Month. Since then, additional resolutions from Congress as well as proclamations by presidents have continued to acknowledge March as Women's History Month.
- Women's history in the United States was rarely acknowledged at all prior to the 1970's. Since then, efforts have been made to promote study of women's history beyond the suffrage movements in school curriculums and among the public consciousness. However, many voices remain underrepresented, especially those of women of color in the United States.
- Local organizations related to National Women's History Month:
 - WNY Women's Foundation - <https://wnywomensfoundation.org/>
 - NYS Women, Inc. Buffalo Niagara Chapter - <https://www.bncwomeninc.org/>
 - National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House - <https://susanb.org/>

Daily Observations

3/1 – Women of Color Day

- The first day in Women's History Month is observed as Women of Color Day – a day to specifically highlight history, achievements, and current issues surrounding women of color in the United States. The history and needs of women of color continue to be underrepresented in comparison to white women and it continues to be important to uplift their narratives.
- The day was designated in 1986 by the National Institute for Women of Color (NIWC), which was formed in 1981 to provide a network of support and to advance the issues of women of color in society. Since then, the day has been observed in many ways, including awards presented to "Outstanding Women of Color," encouraging ethnic dress at events, and holding programs that honor the history and continued accomplishments of these women. While initially an American observance, efforts have been made to extend the observance to an international level.

3/6 - Spread the Word Day: Inclusion

- Spread the Word is a global campaign celebrating 15 years of empowering people to create a more inclusive community to learn, work, play and live in. Exclusion and discrimination continue to divide people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The movement, with a WNY chapter, empowers grassroots leaders and their peers to help change their communities, schools, and workplaces through a call to take action. For more information visit <https://www.spreadtheword.global/>, <https://www3.erie.gov/ecopd/press/spread-word>, and <http://golisanofoundation.org/Golisano-Foundation/Initiatives/Move-to-Include.aspx>.
- Local free celebrations include an event at the Tri-Main Center (community service providers/speakers/entertainment/sign the 2024 pledge) and an evening event at the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens (see Regional Events listings). Look for the People Inc. information tables at both events.

- If you cannot attend the event at Tri-Main, take the pledge for “Spread the Word” online to take a stand against derogatory language targeted at people with intellectual disabilities and help create a society where everyone is valued and free from the impact of harmful stereotypes: <https://www.spreadtheword.global/pledge>

3/8 – Maha Shivaratri

- Maha Shivaratri, also known as the “Great Night of Shiva,” is a Hindi festival that is the most significant spiritual event in India. According to the Indian spiritual calendar, the 14th day of every lunar month or day prior to a new moon is known as a Shivaratri. Mahashivaratri is the Shivaratri that occurs generally from February to March and has the most spiritual significance. It is when one’s energy from nature is said to be at its most natural peak and the night when the Hindu God Shiva performs the heavenly dance of creation, preservation, and destruction.
- The celebrations surrounding Maha Shivaratri involve venerating Shiva, the Hindu deity whose role is to initiate the destruction needed to recreate the world. On the night of this Shivaratri, people fast and stay awake the whole night through, chanting praises and singing hymns to Lord Shiva. Additionally, many offerings of food and drink are made to the deity, including that of cold water and milk.

3/8 – International Women’s Day

- International Women’s Day is observed to celebrate the achievements and lives of women around the world in all areas, including but not limited to culture, politics, and science. The day also exists to confront continued gender inequality in society and focus on the progression of the current women’s rights movements aiming to close these gaps of inequality.
- Although first adopted as a United Nations observance in 1975, the history of the observance of Women’s Day dates back to the early 1900’s, when working women in America began campaigning for better working conditions and better pay. The Socialist Party of America declared the first Women’s Day in 1909. The following year, the idea of an international day for women was proposed at the International Conference of Working Women. As a result of the conference, the very first International Women’s Day was celebrated in 1911 in several European countries.

3/10 – 4/9 – Ramadan

- Ramadan is the most sacred month of the year to Muslims around the world. Ramadan falls 10-12 days earlier every year due to the length of the Muslim calendar, allowing the holy month to be celebrated in all seasons throughout the years.
- According to Muslim beliefs, the words of the Qur’an, the book of Islam, were first written by Muhammad during Ramadan. The month is marked as a time of prayer, introspection, and study of the Qur’an. Additionally, if one is able, they are too fast from sunrise to sunset throughout each day of the holy month. This tradition coincides with the idea of restraint, which is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. The practice of fasting during Ramadan is intended to strengthen one’s self-discipline, focus on the most important aspects of one’s life, and to renew faith.
- The conclusion of Ramadan is celebrated with Eid-al-Fitr (the Festival of Breaking the Fast). Beginning at sundown with a communal prayer, Eid-al-Fitr consists of breaking the month of fasting and celebrating with family and the community.

3/14 – Saint Joseph’s Day

- Also known as the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Saint Joseph’s Day is a Catholic holiday celebrated as the feast day to honor Joseph, the husband of Mary and stepfather of Jesus. The date was selected to celebrate Joseph around the tenth century and was added to the General Roman Calendar in 1621. The holiday is celebrated by the Catholic, Lutheran, and Anglican denominations, although it is never noted in the Bible that Joseph is a saint.
- Saint Joseph’s Day is primarily celebrated in Europe, where Joseph is the patron saint of several European countries and regions. The day is especially significant to Sicily, for Joseph was believed to have prevented a famine in the region through people praying to him during the Middle Ages. In the United States, this holiday is most notably celebrated in New Orleans due to a substantial number of Sicilians immigrating to the city during the 18th century.

- Since Saint Joseph's Day takes place during the Catholic period known as Lent, feasts served on this day are generally meatless. Many who celebrate traditionally wear red on the holiday as a contrast to the green worn for Saint Patrick's Day two days prior.

3/17 – Saint Patrick's Day

- Saint Patrick's Day is a global holiday that is a celebration of Irish culture and history. March 17 marks the anniversary of the death of Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, during the 5th century. Patrick was credited for bringing Christianity to Ireland. The Irish shamrock has become a symbol of this day as it is associated with the legend of Saint Patrick, where he used the three-leaf clover to explain the holy trinity.
- Saint Patrick's Day has been traditionally celebrated in Ireland by attending church in the morning and celebrating the Roman Catholic Feast of Saint Patrick in the afternoon. The first documented Saint Patrick's Day parade was held in 1601. Irish culture flourished among American immigrants during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, which eventually led to the first official Saint Patrick's Day parade in New York City occurring in 1848. This parade is known for being the world's oldest civilian parade and has evolved into the largest in the country.

3/19 – Nowruz

- Also known as Persian New Year, Nowruz is a New Year celebration that marks the beginning of Spring and is celebrated by over 300 million people in countries including Syria, Iran, Turkey, and other parts of Central Asia. The celebration represents rebirth and renewal symbolized by the spring season, as well as the relationship between humans and nature. The Nowruz celebration lasts for two weeks.
- With its traditions based the ancient Persian religion of Zoroastrianism, Nowruz is a celebration that dates back thousands of years. Nowruz is estimated to be around 3,000 years old.
- Methods of celebration vary by country and reason, but mostly revolve around the vernal theme of renewal. During the weeks leading up to Nowruz, families will conduct a deep spring cleaning of their homes and set up a collection of symbolic items for the new year called a "haft seen." Once the festival arrives, families observe by spending time together, eating celebratory dinners, and looking to the upcoming year.

3/21 – World Down Syndrome Day

- World Down syndrome Day is marked each year on the 21st day of March to signify the uniqueness of the triplication of the 21st chromosome which causes Down syndrome. The General Assembly of the United Nations has decided to observe it each year since 2012.

3/21 – International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

- Proclaimed on October 26, 1966, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination calls for an end to racial inequalities, discriminatory policies on the basis of race, and the persistence of racial stereotypes in society. Within the context of its original conception, the day rallied around ending the racist system of apartheid in South Africa. March 21 was selected for this day to commemorate the 1960 tragedy in which police killed 69 people protesting apartheid in Sharpeville, South Africa. The goals of this day remain relevant today.

3/23-24 – Purim

- Meaning "Lots" in Hebrew, Purim is a Jewish observance also referred to as the Feast of Lots. This celebration is a joyous occasion that commemorates the Jewish people being saved from persecution and extermination at the hands of the ancient Persian empire dating back to around 500 BCE. Detailed in the Book of Esther in the Torah, Haman, who was advisor to the Persian King Ahasuerus, convinces him to kill the Jewish people in Persia. However, the Jewish people are saved by Queen Esther, the Jewish wife of the king.
- During Purim, it is customary for people to dress in costume, make loud noise using a noisemaker called a ra'ashan, and listen to the story of Purim from the Megillat Esther (The Scroll of Esther). The ra'ashan is used to blot out Haman's name every time he is mentioned in the story.
- Other traditions of Purim include a fast the day before, sending food to friends, and giving to the poor and less fortunate. The celebration concludes with a feast that begins during the day and is to extend into the night. Responsible drinking is also encouraged as part of this festivity.

3/24 – Palm Sunday

- Palm Sunday marks the first day of Holy Week in Western Christianity. This celebrates Jesus Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, an event mentioned in each of the four Bible Gospels. Its name originates from the palm branches waved by the crowd to greet and honor Jesus as he entered the city.
- John 12:12 &13 - The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!"

3/25 – Holi Day

- Also known as the "Festival of Love" or "Festival of Colors," Holi is a widely celebrated Hindu festival throughout India that begins on the full moon of the month known as Phalunga on the Hindu lunar calendar. A joyous occasion, this festival heralds the transition from winter into spring. Holi also represents a time to spread love and happiness while forgetting grudges or ill feelings between each other.
- Holi dates back to ancient times, appearing in several Hindu religious texts and art murals. The meaning of the term "Holi" is "burning," and the most prominent legend associated with Holi relates to the demon king Hiranyakashyap, who commanded the people of his kingdom to worship only him. However, his son Prahlad refused, remaining devoted to Lord Vishnu. Hiranyakashyap commanded his sister, Holika, to trick Prahlad into sitting in a fire with her, but due to her evil intentions, she was the one who burned instead. Holi therefore celebrates this instance of the triumph of good over evil, as well as the grace gained from devotion. A Holi ritual associated with this legend is the large bonfire created on a pyre-built weeks in advance. Burning an effigy of Holika, this bonfire that kickstarts the festival symbolizes the destruction of evil.
- Holi is referred to as the "Festival of Colors" due to a legend associated with Lord Krishna, who playfully smeared colors on his beloved Radha by his mother's suggestion. One of the festival's main events is a color fight, in which people take to the streets and drench each other with colored water using water guns or water balloons.

3/29 – Good Friday

- Good Friday is a Christian holiday commemorating the crucifixion of Jesus and his death at Calvary. It is observed during Holy Week. It is also known as Holy Friday, Great Friday, Great and Holy Friday, and Black Friday.

3/31 – Easter (Resurrection Sunday)

- Easter is a Christian holiday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, as described in the Bible occurring on the third day after his death and burial following his crucifixion at Calvary.

Regional Events in March

- **Until 3/17** – Diverse Western New York at Castellani Art Museum: <https://castellaniartmuseum.org/exhibitions/diverse-western-new-york>
- **Until 4/14** – Represent: Great Women Artists at MAG Rochester Memorial Art Gallery): <https://mag.rochester.edu/exhibitions/represent-great-women-artists-at-mag/>
- **Until 4/14, \$\$\$** – Say Their Names, Honor Their Legacies: <https://buffalohistory.org/exhibit/say-their-names-honor-their-legacies-2/> (**free on 3/15**)
- **Until 4/28** – The Highwaymen – Black Artists of the Florida Coast at Castellani Art Museum: <https://castellaniartmuseum.org/exhibitions/the-highwaymen-black-artists-of-the-florida-coast>
- **Until 5/31** – The Power of Resilience and Hope – Photography and the Holocaust: Then & Now at CEPA Gallery, Mirabo Press and WNY Book Arts Center, dates and times vary: <https://www.cepagallery.org/exhibit-event/photography-and-the-holocaust-then-and-now-2023/>
- **Ongoing Exhibit, \$\$\$** – Becoming Gendered: Garment as Gender Artifact at Genesee Country Village and Museum: <https://www.gcv.org/becoming-gendered-garment-as-gender-artifact/>

- **Permanent Exhibit, \$\$\$** – The John R. Oishei Native American Gallery at the Buffalo History Museum: <https://buffalohistory.org/exhibit/native-american-gallery/>
- **3/2, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.** – Castellani Art Museum Public Tour of exhibit *Survive, Remember, Thrive: Armenian Traditions in Western New York with Ed Millar*: <http://www.castellaniartmuseum.org/events/cam-public-tours>
- **3/2 – 3/5, \$\$\$** – Afro Latin Dance Community Give Back Festival, Rochester, NY: <https://m.facebook.com/events/1343765092828794/>
- **3/3, 7:00 p.m. \$\$\$** – Our Musical Heritage at Kleinhans Music Hall: <https://kleinhansbuffalo.org/event/red-baraat/>
- **3/3, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. \$\$\$** – Music for Migrant Families: <https://wnypeace.org/wp/event/music-for-migrant-families/>
- **3/4 – 3/5, \$\$\$** – Bharatanatyam Intensive at Devi Bollywood Dance: <https://devibollywooddance.com/workshops/>
- **3/4, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. \$\$\$** – A Night for Ukraine: Songs and Stories with Bria Blessing at The Apex, Getzville, NY: <https://www.facebook.com/briablessing/>
- **3/6, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.** – Spread the Word WNY All Inclusive Event at the Tri-Main Center lobby. Look for the People Inc. table and sign the pledge to be “All INclusive in 2024!” <https://www3.erie.gov/ecopd/press/spread-word>
- **3/6, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.** – Beyond Barriers: A Celebration of Inclusion at the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens. Look for the People Inc. table! <https://www.buffalogardens.com/collections/events/products/free-community-nights>.
- **3/15 – 21**, – 39th Annual Buffalo International Jewish Film Festival: <https://www.jccbuffalo.org/bijff-schedule/>
- **3/17, 12:00 – 4:00 p.m.** – Purim Carnival at JCC of Greater Buffalo: <https://jccsyr.org/purim-carnival-2024/>