People Inc. DEI Calendar: January 2023

Month-long Observances

Braille Literacy Month – All January

- Braille Literacy Month is observed in January along with Braille Day (1/4) to honor the birthday of Louis Braille, who was born January 4, 1809. Louis Braille was a blind man who invented the braille reading and writing system used by those who experience blindness or low vision.
- This month aims to promote awareness and literacy of Braille. Braille is not actually a language, but rather a tactile code that can make a variety of languages accessible to those with vision related disabilities.
- However, over time Braille use has declined due to the use of audio technology for accessibility. According to the National Federation for the Blind, only 10% of blind students are currently learning to understand braille. Although audio technology is significant for accessibility among those with visual disabilities, it is still recommended for these students to learn Braille as it encourages improved all round literacy and opens more career opportunities in one's future.
- Local organizations related to this month:
  - Visually Impaired Advancement - https://viawny.org/
  - Braille Group of Buffalo - http://www.braillegroup.org/About-Us

Daily Observances

1/1 – New Year’s Day

- Family and friends may have meals together and certain foods are eaten for good luck, including pork, as pigs are said to represent plenty and moving forward; black-eyed peas, because of the roundness of the peas signifying a complete year and money and cabbage, which also means prosperity.

1/1 – Emancipation Proclamation

- On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln declared that all persons held as slaves would be freed.
- While it’s an exciting day to remember in our country’s history, it’s just as important to remember that not all slaves were freed in the U.S. on this day. It wasn’t until June 19, 1865 (now celebrated as Juneteenth) that slavery was ended across the Confederacy as troops road into Galveston, Texas.
1/1 – Haitian Independence Day

- Haitian Independence Day commemorates the day Haiti declared itself as an independent nation on January 1, 1804. This declaration made Haiti the first black nation to gain independence from its colonizers, as well as the first nation in the world to outlaw slavery.
- This independence was achieved following a prolonged slave revolt and revolution that began in 1791. Toussaint L'Overture led the battles against the French forces along with other generals who were former slaves. Haiti's fight for independence had lasting global effects for freedom, leading to the abolishment of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in 1807 and inspiring many other slave revolts in the United States and around the world.
- Celebrated along with New Year's Day in Haiti, a unique tradition of celebrating that still carries on today is the preparation of the soup called joumou, a soup made with squash, beef, and other assorted vegetables. The popular story behind this tradition is that the soup was reserved only for the oppressive slave owners in Haiti. To celebrate independence in 1894, the newly freed Haitians prepared this soup as a symbol of freedom, gaining access to food previously forbidden.

1/6 – Feast of the Epiphany

- This Christian feast day celebrates the relevance of God incarnate as Jesus Christ.
- It is always celebrated on the twelfth day of Christmas and commemorates how the star led the three wise men to the baby Jesus.
- Countries around the world will celebrate by decorating floats and dressing up in costumes as the wise men.

1/7 – Orthodox Christmas

- The celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ based on the traditional Julian calendar focusing on religious rituals and traditions, it is a time to find peace, unity and heal the soul.

1/10 – Vodoun Festival

- Also known as Traditional Day or Fête du Vodoun, the Vodoun Festival is a celebration of traditional religions in the West African country of Benin. In particular, the public holiday celebrates Benin's history involving the religion of Vodoun. A majority of the holiday's festivities take place in the city of Ouidah, Benin. The first Vodoun Festival was held in 1993.
- Vodoun practiced in Benin is an ancient religion practiced by at least 30 million people in the West African region. The religion centers on vodun spirits, ranging from major deities to spirits found in trees and other natural occurrences. Veneration of ancestral spirits and providing offerings to spirits are also significant religious practices. Vodoun has many diasporic variations around the world, the most well-known being Haitian voodoo. Sensationalized and exploited by popular media, vodoun religions are some of the most misunderstood in the world. The festival begins with a ritual slaughter of a goat as an offering to the deities. This is followed by festivities such as singing, dancing, and consumption of gin.

1/13 – Korean American Day

- Korean American day celebrates those in America of Korean descent and their role in history. Koreans were first documented to have immigrated to America in 1903. Korean immigrants to America also increased due to the Korean War and the passing of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965.
• Korean Americans have imprinted significant influence on American culture due to this cultural exchange. Notable Korean Americans in history include two-time Olympic gold medalist diver Sammy Lee and architect David Hyn, who revitalized Little Tokyo. Additionally, Korean foods such as kimchi and bulgogi are incredibly popular in America today, as well as Korean music.

1/16 – World Religion Day

• Observed in over 80 countries, the aim of this day is to foster interfaith understanding and harmony by emphasizing the common elements underlying all religions.

1/16 – National Religious Freedom Day

• Declared a national holiday in 1993, National Religious Freedom Day celebrates the anniversary of the adoption of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom by the Virginia General Assembly on January 16, 1786. The purpose of this day is to honor the right for those of any religion to practice in America, as well as the right for people not to practice at all.
• Although the Constitution guarantees freedom of religion, it is still important today to recognize the diversity in religious backgrounds throughout the country and speak out against the oppression and hate many people continue to face every day in the country due to their religion or religious background. This in particular applies to Muslims and Jewish people in America, who continue to deal with hate crimes and other forms of discrimination as a result of islamophobia and antisemitism.

1/16 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day (also known in some states as Civil Rights Day)

• Observed on the third Monday in January each year, MLK Day is a federal holiday that honors the birthday, life, and legacy of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Martin Luther King Jr. is most known for his extensive efforts to protest against and end racial segregation in the United States during the civil rights movement of the 1960s and to achieve racial equality for African Americans. MLK Day has been a federal holiday since 1986 and is a People Inc. agency holiday.
• MLK’s legacy on this day is often honored through students learning about MLK’s role in the civil rights movement, engaging with his powerful speeches and other resources about his work. The persistence of racial injustice and inequality throughout the United States, especially for African Americans, demonstrates how MLK’s ideas and activism still remain relevant today.
• It is also encouraged for Americans to perform acts of volunteer service for their communities on this day, as Dr. King recognized the significance of service for building strong communities. The People Inc. E.T.H.O.S. AmeriCorps members annually participate in a community-based volunteer activity.
  o Check out volunteer opportunities at: United Way of Buffalo & Erie County: https://www.uwbec.org/volunteer

1/27 – International Holocaust Remembrance Day

• This day was created by the United Nations in 2005, to remember the approximately six million Jewish men, women and children murdered by the Nazi government during World War II, and the other five million victims as well including Roma people, people with disabilities and homosexuals.
• Member states are encouraged to establish educational programs about the history of the Holocaust, to teach people about the devastating loss and atrocities that happened during this period and to prevent such future acts of genocide. It also condemns any and all denial of the Holocaust.
Regional Events in January

- **Ongoing throughout January** – *Taeyoul Ryu: Royalty* at the Burchfield Penney:
- **Ongoing throughout January** – *Ecce Sublimia: The Art of Christianity* at the Castellani Art Museum:
  https://castellaniartmuseum.org/exhibitions/ecce-sublimia-the-art-of-christianity
- **Ongoing throughout January** – *I don’t know you like that: The Bodywork of Hospitality* at Center for the Arts SUNY Buffalo: https://www.ubcfa.org/events-exhibitions/exhibitions/i-dont-know-you-like-that.html
- **Until 1/22** – *CALL FOR ART* : Submit art for upcoming exhibit *As I Recall Her: Artists Expand the Legacy of the Douglass Women* hosted by the Rochester Contemporary Art Center:
  http://www.rochestercontemporary.org/exhibitions/as-i-recall-her-artists-expand-the-legacy-of-the-douglass-women/
- **1/2 – 1/6, 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., $$$** – Canadian Friendship Week at Holiday Valley Resort:
  https://www.holidayvalley.com/activities-events/calendar/?p=1&page=event&id=6&v=list
- **1/4, 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.** – Virtual Cooking Series with Chef Marshall Goldstein, hosted by JCC Buffalo:
- **1/5, 7:30 p.m. – midnight** – Innisfree Adult Dancers: Traditional Irish Set Dance Lesson at Buffalo Irish Center:
  https://www.buffaloirishcenter.com/irish-culture/
- **1/5, 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., $$$** – Book Club “Wearing the Letter P” with Author Sophie Hodorowicz Knab at Burchfield Penney Art Center:
  https://burchfieldpenney.org/events/event:01-05-2023-6-30pm-book-club/
- **1/7, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.** – Gary Garippo Memorial Blood Drive and Organ Donor Awareness Event, Lackawanna, NY:
  https://www.facebook.com/events/8852869167083
- **1/11, 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., $$$** – Qigong & Sound Healing at Ambient Sound Healing:
- **1/14, 6:30 p.m. – 1/15, 1:00 a.m., $$$** – Traditional Ukrainian New Year’s Dance - Malanka:
  https://ukrainiansofbuffalo.com/
- **1/15, 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m., $$$** – Sensory Friendly Sunday at The Strong National Museum of Play, Rochester, NY:
- **1/16, 10:00 a.m.** – MLK Day of Caring at Michigan St African American Corridor, Buffalo, NY:
  https://www.michiganstreetbuffalo.org/event-details/mlk-day-of-caring-1
- **1/21, 6:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m., $$$** – Robert Burns Dinner and Ceilidh, Niagara Falls, NY:
  https://macbagpipe.ticketspice.com/burns
- **Beginning 1/27** – George Afedzi Hughes, *Identity, Power, and Reconciliation* at Buffalo Arts Studio:
  https://www.buffaloartsstudio.org/events/george-hughes-solo-exhibition/
- **1/29, noon – 3:00 p.m., $$$** – Buffalo’s Original Drag Brunch on Chandler – January Edition: