



## DIVERSITY COUNCIL MISSION STATEMENT

*Carisk Partners will be leaders by continuing to embrace the differences of its team members to expand its competitive edge; while promoting a diverse and inclusive environment through our commitment to education both internally and externally.*

*We will leverage our unique capacity as change agents to strengthen our relationships with our Carisk team members, and with the communities and business partners we all serve.*

*We will strive to do good by being good.*

## WELCOME

Welcome to our 1st Edition of our quarterly newsletter- Carisk Kaleidoscope, we hope you enjoy reading it, as much as the Diversity Council enjoyed putting it together. 🧩

## JUST LIKE ME

BY PAULLA DANIELS BURTON

This is a practice for increasing compassion. It helps us to remember what we share as human beings. It's not a replacement for methods of coming to appreciate our differences, yet those are incredibly important too.

It helps us to remember what we share as human beings.

Begin by being aware that there is a person in front of you, either in your mind or actually sitting across from you. A fellow human being just like you. Silently repeat the following phrases while looking at your partner.

*Our outer shells may be different in size, shape and color  
But you have one just like me*

*Our hearts may beat at a different pace  
But you have one just like me*

*We may speak a different language  
But you speak one just like me*

*We may have a different thought process  
But you have one just like me*

*We may have different financial status  
But you have one just like me*

*We may go through ups and downs at different times  
But you go through them just like me*

*There is no need to be Diverse in Diversity  
Because you are*

**JUST LIKE ME** 🧩



## Members of the Diversity Council



### LEADER OF THE DIVERSITY COUNCIL

#### Anabel Rawlins

Provider Relations Specialist  
Miami, FL

*"We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color." – Maya Angelou*



#### Sally Balioni

Sales Manager, CiC  
Wall, NJ

*"You cannot change what you are, only what you do."*



#### Cecilia Charles

Senior Provider Relations Coordinator  
Florham Park, NJ

*"Strength lies in differences, not in similarities"*



#### Paulla Daniels Burton

Billing Analyst  
Fort Lauderdale, FL

*"We cannot be separated in interest or divided in purpose. We stand together until the end." – Woodrow T. Wilson.*



#### Caroline de Brito Gottlieb

Data and Product Manager  
NYC/Remote

*"It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences." – Audre Lorde*



#### Lori Height

Executive Sales Assistant  
Wall, NJ

*Promoting a community of acceptance and belonging*



#### Marybeth Lombardino

Administrative Assistant  
Florham Park, NJ

*"The headlines you make in this life will be based on the differences you made in the lives of others"*



#### Sunita Mathur

Claim File Coordinator  
Florham Park, NJ

*"Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization" – Mahatma Gandhi*



#### Diane Nicolo

Director of Administration  
Remote

*"Every person is a new door to a different world"*



#### Robert Post

Vice President, Strategic Initiatives, Human Resources and Training | Florham Park, NJ

*"We have become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams." – Jimmy Carter*



#### Grace Roque

Special Projects Manager  
Miami, FL

*"Having the right attitude & mindset can literally change your life."*



#### Michael Rydman

Senior Vice President, Sales  
Benicia, California

*"All men are created equal" – Thomas Jefferson, 1776*



#### Allen Spokane

Chief Technology Officer  
Florham Park, NJ

*"Nobody Wins Unless Everybody Wins" – Bruce Springsteen*



#### David Vittoria

Senior Vice President,  
Clinical Business & Product Development  
Miami, FL

*"Our diversity is the one thing we all have in common."*

## Employee Spotlight – Patricia Guzman Furman

*“Diversity is being invited to the party; Inclusion is being asked to dance” Verna Myers*

Today in our Employee Spotlight we recognize Patricia Guzman Furman, Scheduling Team Leader, from our Florham Park, NJ Office. Patricia joined the Carisk Family in May 2012. She is very patient and works hard in the Scheduling Department – her personality is energetic and so vibrant! Patricia’s Manager, Crystal Cottrill said “Patricia is my right hand, I don’t know what I would do without her”. We recently spoke to Patricia to ask her the following questions about her life:



**What is your native country:** “Colombia – It’s a beautiful country to see! We have great food, great people, beautiful beaches and THE BEST COFFEE!” Patricia was raised in the capital city of Bogota, where she grew up in a very large family of 15 siblings (she is the baby - #15!) There were 9 sisters and 6 brothers and her loving parents Vicente and Aminta. Six of her siblings came to the US and the others stayed in Colombia. Patricia studied Dentistry there.

**When and why did you come to the United States?** “My sister was living in the US and I came to visit her. I met my former husband, who was in the US Navy. We were married in 1994 and lived in various places where he was stationed: Virginia; Colorado; and then we settled back in his home state, New Jersey. My In-laws were very supportive and helpful to me through the years.” One of Patricia’s objectives was to become a US citizen and in 1998, after passing her Citizenship Test and completing the required interview, she became a proud American.

**Life in the USA:** Patricia attended school here to sharpen her English and worked several jobs as she became accustomed to her new life; she worked as a Dental Assistant, and for American International Group for 7 years prior to joining our company. She added that there are more opportunities for women in this country.

**Tell us about your greatest accomplishments:** “My son Christopher was born in 1999. Today he is 21 years old and has been in the US Navy for the past 2 years – he is currently a 3rd Class Petty Officer and is stationed in San Diego, CA.” This proud Mom was able to visit with her handsome, smart son last year in California and in New Jersey for Christmas.

**Have you had a chance to go to Colombia to visit?**

“Yes, I have been back several times over the years with my in-laws and family to see my beautiful country. Last year during my visit, we celebrated the anniversary of my Mother’s passing (this is customary before the 5-year anniversary). It was a huge family reunion! It was a wonderful party with almost 150 people in attendance!”

**Can you tell us about holidays your culture celebrates:**

“We celebrate many similar holidays such as Mother’s/ Father’s Day, Independence Day, Christopher Columbus Day, Holy Week/Easter, Christmas Eve,”(which is more festive than Christmas Day). The highlight of the Christmas Eve celebration was always Noche Buena, a fruit dessert that was her mother’s specialty. Her secret recipe consisted

*Continued on page 4...*





## Carnaval de Negros y Blancos (Blacks and Whites' Carnival)



*Blacks and Whites' Carnival is the largest carnival celebration in south Colombia, its geographical indication belongs to the city of Pasto. It is celebrated from January 2nd to the 7th of each year and attracts a considerable number of Colombian and foreign tourists.*

*Continued from page 3....*

of papaya, lime peel and figs in a syrup made of sugar, cinnamon and a few secret ingredients.

She also celebrated many regional carnivals, the largest carnival of which is held from January 2nd – 7th each year – “Carnaval de Negros y Blancos” - “The Blacks and Whites Carnival,” which is celebrated across South Colombia. It attracts a considerable number of Colombians and foreign tourists. This is a colorful and fun celebration of events, parades, costumes/masks, music and food that residents look forward to each year. This carnival is one of the oldest and was originally granted by the King of Spain in 1607 to commemorate the day the African slaves that were brought to Colombia were granted a free day. The event continued to be refined through the years and reached several social spheres.

The modern version of the carnival begins on January 6th – The Epiphany Day. The celebration is a manifestation of their intent to convey happiness, friendship, playfulness and creativity for all. It's a time held to share joys that the particular time of the year reminds them of.

**Fun Fact About Patricia:** She loves “American” Football & is a big Green Bay Packers Fan!!!

**What's new?** Some happy news since the recent passing of her dog Marble and while working remotely...Patricia recently adopted a new, fur baby named Lily during the pandemic.

**Thank you for sharing your journey Patricia. You are a valuable part of the Carisk Family and we wish you continued success!** 🙌



## The Talk

Featuring articles on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion, that trigger conversation and thought.

*“Cognitive Schemas-thought structures-influence what we notice and how the things we notice get interpreted.” – Michelle Alexander*

What is Implicit or Unconscious Bias?

The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. It causes us to have feelings and attitudes about people based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age and appearance. It is developed over the course of a lifetime through exposure to direct and indirect messages.

Implicit/unconscious biases operate almost entirely on an unconscious level – It may not be intentional, however we need to be more aware of implicit biases existing for ourselves and others. And while unconscious, the existence of implicit biases and their effects can have very real and potentially devastating consequences.

In addition, The National Initiative for Building Community, Trust and Justice states “Implicit bias describes the automatic association people make between groups and stereotypes about these groups which can make people respond in biased ways even when they are not explicitly prejudiced.”

Being aware of the existence of implicit biases and striving to minimize them can help. Here are some strategies you can employ to reduce your own bias:

- Focus on seeing people as individuals. Rather than focusing on stereotypes to define people, spend time considering them on a more personal, individual level.
- Work on consciously changing your stereotypes. If you do recognize that your response to a person might be rooted in biases or stereotypes, make an effort to consciously adjust your response.
- Take time to pause and reflect. In order to reduce reflexive reactions, take time to reflect on potential biases and replace them with positive examples of the stereotyped group.
- Adjust your perspective. Try seeing things from another person’s point of view. How would you respond if you were in the same position? What factors might contribute to how a person acts in a particular setting or situation?
- Increase your exposure. Spend more time with people of different racial backgrounds. Learn about their culture by attending community events or exhibits.
- Practice mindfulness. Try meditation, yoga, or focused breathing to increase mindfulness and become more aware of your thoughts and actions.

To learn more please visit the helpful resources below.

[Measuring the implicit biases we may not even be aware we have.](#)

[How Does Implicit Bias Influence Behavior?](#)

[Implicit Bias and Racial Disparities in Health Care.](#) 



## Health Awareness Angle

*"There can be no happiness without good health." –Voltaire*

The Fall and Winter Seasons bring us awareness of multiple diseases as indicated in our monthly calendars... For our 1st Edition, we are highlighting the striking statistics and facts on breast cancer and diabetes.



### BREAST CANCER

WHO (World Health Organization), sites that breast cancer is the most common cancer in women both in the developed and less developed world.

In simple terms, the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), describes breast cancer as a disease

in which cells in the breast grow out of control. There are different kinds of breast cancer. The kind of breast cancer depends on which cells in the breast turn into cancer. Breast cancer can begin in different parts of the breast.

According to BreastCancer.Org, about 1 in 8 U.S. women (about 12%) will develop invasive breast cancer over the course of their lifetime. In 2020, an estimated 276,480 new cases of invasive breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed in women in the U.S., along with 48,530 new cases of non-invasive (in situ) breast cancer. In women under 45, breast cancer is more common in African American women than White women. For Asian, Hispanic, and Native-American women, the risk of developing and dying from breast cancer is lower, however according to the NIH (National Institutes of Health), between the ages of 60 and 84, breast cancer incidence rates are strikingly higher in White women than in African American women, but African American women are more likely to die from breast cancer at every age. Ashkenazi Jewish women have a higher risk of breast cancer because of a higher rate of BRCA mutations.

Men are not excluded from getting breast cancer. About 2,620 new cases of invasive breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed in men in 2020. A man's lifetime risk of breast cancer is about 1 in 883.

[Please click here to learn more about breast cancer.](#)



### DIABETES

Diabetes affects millions of people worldwide and is one of the major risk factors for poor health outcomes from COVID-19.

The CDC, describes diabetes as a condition in which the body

does not properly process food for use as energy. Most of the food we eat is turned into glucose, or sugar, for our bodies to use for energy. The pancreas, an organ that lies near the stomach, makes a hormone called insulin to help glucose get into the cells of our bodies.

According to the CDC, in the United States alone, there are 34.2 million Americans or 1 in 10 that have diabetes. 88 million American adults approximately 1 in 3 have prediabetes. There are health disparities with diabetes. New diabetes cases are higher among non-Hispanic blacks and people of Hispanic origin than non-Hispanic Asians and non-Hispanic whites. Diabetes is 60% more common in African Americans than in White Americans. African Americans are up to 2.5 times more likely to suffer a limb amputation and up to 5.6 times more likely to suffer kidney disease than other people with diabetes.

[Please click here to learn more about Diabetes.](#)

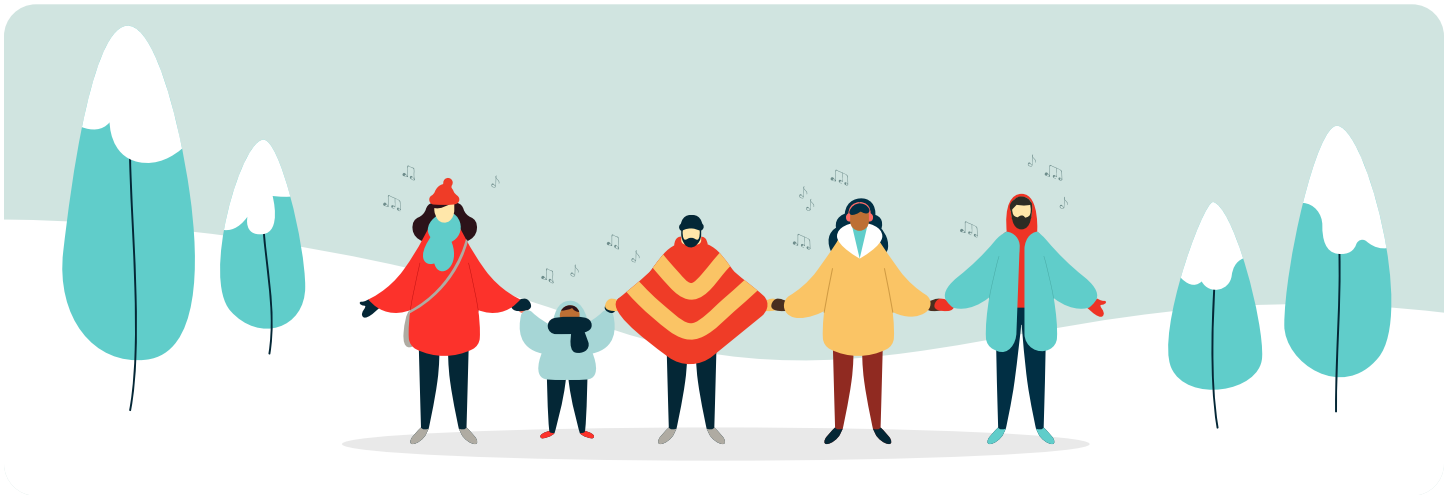
According to medicareadvocacy.org, the elimination of racial and ethnic health disparities would save the US Health Care System, billions of dollars annually.

Please click here to learn more about racial and ethnic disparities in health care. [Disparities in Health and Health Care: Five Key Questions and Answers.](#)



## Holiday Alcove

*"A holiday is an opportunity to journey within. It is also a chance to chill, to relax. It is when I switch on my rest mode." –Prabhas*



The Fall and Winter Months bring us many opportunities to celebrate and enjoy as mentioned in our monthly calendars. We are showcasing 5 of our favorite holidays, Diwali, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas and Kwanza; with additional information from the CDC on how to celebrate safely: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>

**Diwali 2020**, will be celebrated on Saturday, November 14. It is called the Festival of Lights and is celebrated to honor Rama-chandra, the seventh avatar (incarnation of the god Vishnu). It is believed that on this day Rama returned to his people after 14 years of exile during which he fought and won a battle against demons and the demon king, Ravana.

[Please click on this link to learn more about Diwali.](#)

**Thanksgiving**, a holiday celebrated on the 4th Thursday of every November, does not need any introduction because we all look forward to the fun and great food with family and friends.

[Please click here to discover the regional Thanksgiving dishes across the USA.](#)

**Hanukkah 2020**, will begin in the evening of Thursday, December 10 and ends in the evening of Friday, December 18. Hanukkah commemorates the rededication during the second century B.C. of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, where according to legend, Jews had risen up against their Greek Syrian oppressors in the Maccabean revolt.

[Please click here to learn more about Hanukkah.](#)

**Christmas**, is celebrated in many different ways across this diverse world of ours. Explore the differences and similarities.

[Please click here to witness how Christmas is celebrated around the world.](#)

**Kwanza 2020**, in the United States will begin on Saturday, December 26 and ends on Friday, January 1, 2021. An African American and Pan African holiday celebrated by millions throughout the world. Kwanza brings a cultural message which speaks to the best of humanity. It culminates in gift giving and a feast of faith, it was first celebrated in 1966.

[Please click here to learn more about Kwanza](#) 🌍

## Hope for the Holidays

For the last few years, Carisk has supported a number of worthy organizations, as part of our annual [Hope for the Holidays](#) campaign. Last year, we raised \$5000 for four non-profit agencies in Florida and New Jersey, each committed to strengthening their community, supporting families in need, and protecting the most vulnerable among us. This year, we've selected these four organizations as the beneficiaries of our ongoing commitment to help local agencies that are in the communities in which we live and work, and who are aligned with our mission to do well, by doing good.



[House of Hope](#) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the treatment and support of those suffering from substance use and mental illness. Serving the South Florida community for over 50 years, House of Hope provides outpatient and residential treatment, peer coaching, family education and support, life skills development, as well as psychiatric and medical services to hundreds of clients every year. They also offer parenting classes, job skills and vocational training, and help their clients complete their education, through GED and higher education programs.



Serving men, women, and children experiencing homelessness in South Florida for 80 years, [Miami Rescue Mission](#) provides emergency shelter, residential programs, job training, educational and computer literacy classes, healthcare, employment opportunities and dedicated programs for at-risk youth. In 2019 alone, Miami Rescue Mission provided almost one million meals, helped over 800 men and women find employment, provided special program for over 200 children, and provided 375,000 nights of safe shelter to those in need.




This year, we again offer our support to [Jersey Battered Women's Services](#) (JBWS). Their mission is the prevention of domestic violence through the protection and empowerment of the victim, the rehabilitation of family members, the advocacy for social reform to prevent partner violence, and the education of the public about domestic violence and its consequences. Just last year, JBWS helped over 5,000 hotline callers with crisis assistance, found over 150 adults and children safe shelter, and delivered over 5,500 hours of counseling and support to more than 200 adult survivors of abuse.



**Interfaith Food Pantry**  
and Resource Center

The [Interfaith Food Pantry](#), based in Morris Plains, New Jersey, provides Morris County residents in need with access to food and nutrition education. Through their Healthy Choices, Mobile Pantry, Home Delivery, Thanksgiving Basket, Family Self-Sufficiency, Youth Involvement, and other community programs, Interfaith Food Pantry has provided meals to thousands of families over the past 25 years. Interfaith has also engaged thousands of members of the community, as part of their volunteer programs and community-wide education and food-drive efforts.

Check your Carisk email soon, for more information on each of these wonderful organizations, and to donate to [Carisk's 2020 Hope for the Holidays Campaign!](#) 



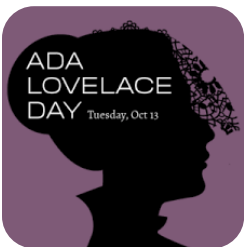
## Noteworthy Days

*“Life is a canvas. Every action or ours is a stroke of paint and at the end, how beautiful our painting is will depend upon all of our strokes, all our actions.” –Unknown*

Every month we receive a calendar with multiple dates of significance which reflect our worldwide diversity, it wasn't easy narrowing the list for this edition.



**October 1—International Day of Older Persons**, highlights contributions made by older individuals to society. It also raises awareness of struggles that come with aging in modern society.



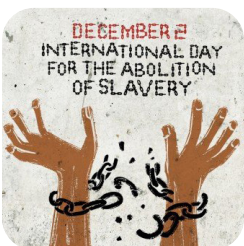
**October 13—Ada Lovelace Day**, celebrates the achievements of women in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). The day aims to encourage more women into STEM careers and supports those already working in STEM.



**November 16—International Day of Tolerance**, seeks to promote tolerance, respect, appreciation and cooperation amongst the world's different cultures. Tolerance refers to the recognition and acceptance of looks, opinions, beliefs and practices that differ from one's own. Tolerance is considered the backbone of human rights and fundamental freedoms as people are naturally different. Tolerance allows mixed communities to thrive and ensures that all humans are equally important.




**November 25— International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women**, seeks to prevent physical violence against women. According to the United Nations, it is estimated that about 35% of all women have been either physically or sexually abused.



**December 2—United Nations', International Day for the Abolition of Slavery**, builds awareness around bonded labor, forced labor, the worst kinds of child labor and human trafficking. These are global problems that go against Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



**December 3—United Nations', International Day of Persons with Disabilities**, aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development, and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life. 



## CARISK CAFE


*“One of the very nicest things about life is the way we must regularly stop whatever it is we are doing and devote our attention to eating.” –Luciano Pavarotti*

Sharing the international flavors gracing the tables of the Carisk Family members...

Marybeth loves to cook and shared her recipe for the all-time American favorite, cranberry sauce which can be enjoyed throughout the holiday season; while Bob and Allen shared their favorite dishes for The Hanukkah Feast. Anabel didn't know if she should choose recipes from Cuba or Jamaica and decided to put culinary treasures from both Caribbean countries on the same plate. Patricia has many favorite recipes but she choose Colombia's Cazuela de Marisco, which says it all for seafood lovers. Grace selected Sancocho, a delicious treat from the Dominican Republic and Sunita the latest member to join the Diversity Council, did not want to miss out on the “party with a cosmopolitan flair” and very quickly decided on a very well-known appetizer from India called Samosa.

Take a look at some of our favorite recipes [on sharepoint](#) and let us know if you agree with us!


In reference to the link:

1. CBH collaboration Center
2. HR
3. Recipes of the Carisk Cafe 

## What's Around the Corner?

*“The future is literally in our hands to mold as we like. But we cannot wait until tomorrow. Tomorrow is now.” –Eleanor Roosevelt*

- Carisk Kaleidoscope-Spring Edition
- Diversity Training, Stay Tuned
- Guest Speaker, Stay Tuned
- Sharepoint Repository, a site where the Diversity Council shares articles, books and videos about Diversity, Equality & Inclusion (DE&I), vetted by our Sub-Committee
- Togetherness Tuesday, a series showcasing thoughts about (DE&I) with the added feature of “Carisk Family” member profiles
- Virtual Suggestion Box, to share our thoughts

Perhaps a surprise or 2...who knows!!!, only time will tell 

## Final Thoughts

*“One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas day. Don't clean it up too quickly.” –Mickey Rooney*

Feel free to suggest any additional ideas that you would like to see featured in our quarterly newsletter or endeavors for consideration; there is always an open invitation to join us.

On behalf of the Diversity Council, have a wonderful and safe Holiday Season. See you in 2021 