



Carisk Kaleidoscope

April 11, 2023 | V03 . Q02

DIVERSITY COUNCIL MISSION STATEMENT

There are over 330 million people in the United States of America and everyone is diverse in their own way. At Carisk, we celebrate everyone's uniqueness.

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.

Carisk Partners is proud of the diversity of its company's members, irrespective of genetic information, race, color, religion, age, sex, range of abilities, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, or veteran's status.

We will strive to do well by doing good.



"I have always loved meeting new people from different backgrounds. It was always intriguing to me to hear someone else's "story". It is my strong belief that people and organizations make better decisions when they have diversity of thoughts. Each of us bring our life experiences into all we do. Everyone's life experiences generally created a perspective, whether consciously or unconsciously. Having a diverse workplace only strengthens the paths we choose to take."

—Joseph Berardo, Jr., Chairman and CEO

Acknowledgments

Welcome to the 2023 spring edition of Carisk Kaleidoscope. The Council wishes every Carisk Family member and their loved ones a wonderful and happy season.

We have addressed ongoing challenges in our society, featured in articles on our youths, and chronic absenteeism in our schools, which has doubled to 16 million students since the end of the pandemic. We also looked at the state of maternal health; international data indicates that mortality rates continue to worsen in the U.S.

A conversation started by Sunita and content from Bob produced our article for Black History Month, as we look at landmark legislation, Brown v. the Board of Education. Bob also inspired "Supreme Court Firsts", while Sunita contributed to "Special Days" and is responsible for "Highlight in Diversity."

We continue with Diane who provided our "Positivity Poster" and a little known story about my favorite jazz musician, inspiring a new section "Did You Know?"

Sally shared fantastic news with us, which served as the motivation for an additional new section "One of Our Own".

Allen's brainchild "Sports Corner" includes a discussion on Vince Lombardi and his lasting legacy on football.



Angela Gengler, guest contributor prompted us to Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month. We also welcomed a new visitor, Anne Lepre.

The Council thanks Kevin Mahoney for his content on "Special Days".

Thank you CK planning committee (Bob, Diane, Lori & Sunita), as well as all Council members for all of your collaborations which include our serious conversations, light hearted banter, comments and participation in our Council meetings. Great job by all. Happy spring.

Anabel

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Uniquely Made



Let us break down the stereotype ever so ancient
For every one of us is uniquely magnificent
We were born with different shapes, colors and size.
This diversity is nature’s blessing in disguise
It is invisible at times yet alive in every place
A force not limited by age, gender, or race.
We were born in different shapes, color and size.
Yet none of us decided our DNA and blood type
This diversity makes us beautiful
For real beauty is between our thoughts and soul
We were born in different shapes, color and size.
Because the world would be rather dull otherwise

GEMS FirstPoint School 

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



Jen Andrews

Executive Assistant

Remote

"The beauty of the world lies in the diversity of its people." –Unknown



Sally Balioni

VP of Sales, CiC

Wall, NJ

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



Brian DeNichilo

System Administrator

Florham Park, NJ

"No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite." –Nelson Mandela



Shannon Ehrola

Director, Brand Creative

Wall, NJ

"The beauty of the world lies in the diversity of its people." –Unknown



Lori Height

Executive Sales Assistant

Wall, NJ

Promoting a community of acceptance and belonging



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

Vice President of Administration

Remote

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



Robert Post

Senior Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Human Resources and Training

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



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



Michele St. Preux

Provider Relations Coordinator

Florham Park, NJ

"Our diversity is our strength. What a dull and pointless life it would be if everyone was the same." –Angelina Jolie



Michael Vialonga

Sales Associate

Wall, NJ

"We cannot change the world, until we change ourselves." – Anonymous



David Vittoria

Chief Behavioral Health Officer

Miami, FL

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

Welcome Alcove



Carisk Partners welcomes our four new team members who joined us in December 2022. We wish them the best of luck for a great and long-term working association. All the best in their new positions.

Grant Berardo—Grant is our newest Junior Business Analyst, reporting to Matt Sexton, Manager of Business Analytics. Grant worked for Carisk as an Intern while in high school and college, and recently graduated from the University of South Carolina with a major in Finance.

Angela Gengler—Angela is joining Carisk as a Clinical Quality Nurse, reporting to Michelle Gonsowski, Clinical Quality Manager. She is a Registered Nurse and a Certified Case Manager who most recently worked as a Clinical Quality Reviewer for Genex.

Kat Marabeti—Kat is joining Carisk as an Associate Product Manager, reporting to Chrissy Gaul, Senior Vice President of Marketing. Kat most recently worked as an Intern for the CiC Sales Team and recently graduated from James Madison University with a degree in Health Services Administration.

Yasmeen Wilson—Yasmeen is our latest Payment Poster, reporting to Esmeralda Prado, Payment Posting Supervisor. Yasmeen began her Carisk career as a temporary employee and because of her exemplary work; we hired her on a full-time basis.

Grant, Angela, Kat, and Yasmeen best of luck to all of you and welcome to the Carisk Family! 

The Talk

Featuring topics on Diversity which trigger thought and conversation

3 years since the pandemic wrecked attendance, kids still aren't showing up to school

March 2, 2023, [Heard on All Things Considered](#)

By [Jonaki Mehta](#)

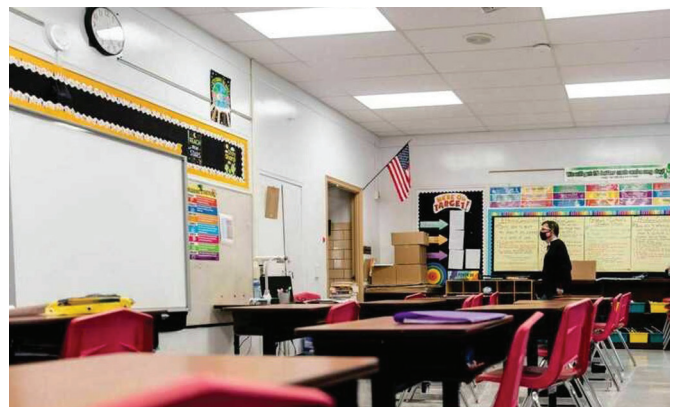
When this school year began, Issac Moreno just couldn't get himself to go. During the pandemic, he'd gotten used to learning from his family's home in Los Angeles. Then, last fall, he started junior high, five days a week, in person.

"It was a lot," he says.

The last fully normal school year Issac remembers is third grade. Now, he's in seventh, with multiple classes each day, a busier schedule and new classmates.

Issac's mother, Jessica Moreno, says it's been a struggle to get Issac back into the routine of going to school. Her eyes well up as she describes it: "Three days a week or four days a week, he will say to me, 'I'm sick. I don't feel OK. Can you just pick me up? I don't want to be here.'"

She says Issac has already missed 10 days of school this year, which means he's at risk of becoming chronically



absent.

And Issac is not alone. Before the pandemic, about 8 million U.S. students were considered chronically absent, according to the research group Attendance Works. That's when a student misses 10% or more of the school year. By spring 2022, that number had doubled to around 16 million.

Federal attendance data only comes out annually, so it's hard to get a full picture of where things stand at this point in the school year, but Hedy Chang, the executive director of Attendance Works, says she hasn't seen the kind of recovery she'd hoped for.

"I think people have been a little bit under the false impression that when COVID became more endemic, that would then result in a significant improvement in attendance. And I'm not seeing that."

In a survey of 21 school districts in rural, suburban and urban areas, NPR found most districts – from New York City to Austin, Texas, to Lawrence, Kan. – still had heightened levels of chronic absenteeism.

Students who are chronically absent are at higher risk of [falling behind](#), [scoring lower on standardized tests](#) and even [dropping out](#). As often happens in education, students who struggle with attendance are also more likely to live in poverty, be children of color or have disabilities. Chang worries the kids missing out on school are the same ones who need it the most.

"Showing up to school makes sure that you have access to resources," she says, "whether that's food and nutrition, whether that's after school and engaging learning experiences, whether that's access to health care."

Why students aren't showing up to class

In Anne Arundel County Public Schools, outside Baltimore, chronic absenteeism has worsened over each of the last three years.

"Transportation has been our number one issue," says Ryan Voegtlin, director of student services for the large Maryland district. He says a bus driver shortage has made it hard to cover all the bus routes and guarantee transportation for every student.

"That impacts a lot of our higher poverty areas where some of our parents don't have as flexible of jobs, where they may not have their own transportation."

According to Voegtlin, increased mental health concerns and heightened caution around sending kids to school when they're not feeling well have also taken a toll on attendance.

On the road to healing, tribal citizens are speaking out about boarding schools

In rural San Juan County, New Mexico, Superintendent Steve Carlson says attendance numbers have improved this year, but they haven't returned to pre-pandemic levels. He echoes the challenges Voegtlin described, with one exception: His school district, Central Consolidated, is partially in Navajo Nation, and his schools serve Native American communities that were [disproportionately affected by COVID](#), with higher infection and hospitalization rates compared to other groups. Families in his district are still recovering emotionally, and the schools still have mask mandates. There's also still fear around large gatherings of people, which are hard to avoid in schools. Moreover, given [the history of boarding schools](#), Carlson says his district's Native families don't generally think of school as a safe place. "It's really difficult to get those families to say, 'Yeah, sure, we'd love to send our kids back to school.'" "

[Students have] lost connections to peers, they've lost connections to adults ... But that means we need to be even more intentional about relationship building, connecting to kids.

In Issac Moreno's district, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), attendance has improved compared to last school year, but Superintendent Alberto Carvalho says it hasn't yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.

"Much needs to be fixed alongside the attendance issue, because there are root causes that are keeping kids from school," he says.

Carvalho describes the same attendance challenges NPR heard from multiple districts around the country: a youth mental health crisis, heightened fear around health concerns, transportation difficulties, poverty, and homelessness, which can make it difficult for students to keep a routine around going to school.

Several school leaders also told NPR they worry their students have lost a sense of belonging in the classroom after so much time away. Heidy Chang of Attendance Works shares those concerns:

“[Students have] lost connections to peers, they’ve lost connections to adults, and it has certainly been exacerbated by very challenging staffing issues in schools. But that means we need to be even more intentional about relationship building, connecting to kids.”

What schools can do to improve attendance

Carvalho says, “Money is not an issue ... The entire nation is currently flooded with federal [COVID]

In addition, many districts – including LAUSD, Anne Arundel County and Central Consolidated – are using that money to address absenteeism.

Home visits are one proven strategy schools are investing in. The state of Connecticut put close to \$10.7 million of its federal relief aid toward a robust home-visit program; six months later, attendance [improved by about 15 percentage points](#) among students in the program.

Chang says, while home visits are effective, “how you do them matters a lot.” She says the most successful home-visit programs involve trained school staff or teachers who make repeated visits and maintain ongoing relationships throughout the year.

How grown-ups can help kids transition to ‘post-pandemic’ school life

LAUSD recently started using its home-visit program to target children experiencing housing insecurity. “The most vulnerable kids who are absent the most [in L.A.] happen to be homeless children,” Carvalho told NPR after touring a crisis center where such children sought shelter.

His district has also hired more attendance counselors and “community navigators” to help caregivers tap into district resources, and it’s providing concierge transportation for students with unstable housing.

In New Mexico, Steve Carlson is investing in more mental health resources, including extra counselors. Moreover, in Maryland, Voegtlin has hired more bus-drivers, though he still does not have enough for every bus route. Voegtlin’s district is also reaching out to families before students become chronically absent, and he and his team are working to educate caregivers about the long-term impacts of kids missing school.

“It’s not a quick process,” he explains, “but it’s a process that [has allowed] people to start understanding that everyone owns attendance, and not just when it gets to the chronic point.”

He says his district tries to avoid the punitive approaches of years past. For example, they only file charges in truancy court as a last resort after exhausting other attempts to connect with families.

Chang says another way to improve attendance is to gather regular, transparent data throughout the school year, rather than only once, at the end of the year.

“When you look at your data regularly on an individual level, it can allow you to reach out to students before the challenges are so entrenched that you can’t turn them around,” she says.

In Michigan, Grand Rapids Public Schools collects and analyzes data multiple times a month. Mel Atkins, who leads attendance efforts there, has found sharing that data widely can make a difference.

“I know you need the data to know where we’re going and how big the problem actually is,” he explains. “So we share the data with community partners, parents.”

Before the pandemic, he says his district used 8-foot leaderboards to display monthly attendance data. “It wasn’t always good, but what it did was spark a conversation.”

What One District's Data Mining Did For Chronic Absence

That data-driven program helped [cut chronic absenteeism by more than half in his district](#). The pandemic hampered much of that progress, but Atkins says he and his team are focused on restarting those efforts, and getting back to a playbook they already know works.

Giving students a sense of belonging at school

Nearly every educator NPR spoke to for this story said they want to provide a school environment that gives students a sense of belonging – one that hopefully gets them back into the classroom.

“We want to provide environments where students want to be, so when they walk in the door, they feel safe and they say, ‘I’m welcome here and I want to learn,’ “ says Carlson of New Mexico.

One way to create environments where students want to be is to give them some say. At Brooklyn Center Middle and High School, just outside Minneapolis, students asked for more classes outside the traditional curriculum, and the school responded by offering two class periods a week in which students get to pick from classes like “Create Your Own Video Game,” “Art in the Garden” and “Dungeons and Dragons.”

Between December 2021 and December 2022, the school cut absenteeism by more than half. Principal Josh Fraser says his team hasn’t yet collected enough data to prove the new classes directly led to better attendance, but he says the vast majority of students have found a subject they identify with, and that has been key.

“The value of students seeing the power and voice they have, and it actually reflecting in decisions that hugely impact their day-to-day...I think it’s something that creates belonging,” he says.

THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

School Attendance in the COVID Era: What Counts As ‘Present’?

A sense of belonging has started to make a difference for Issac Moreno, in L.A. His middle school recently launched a new sports program, which he was eager to join.

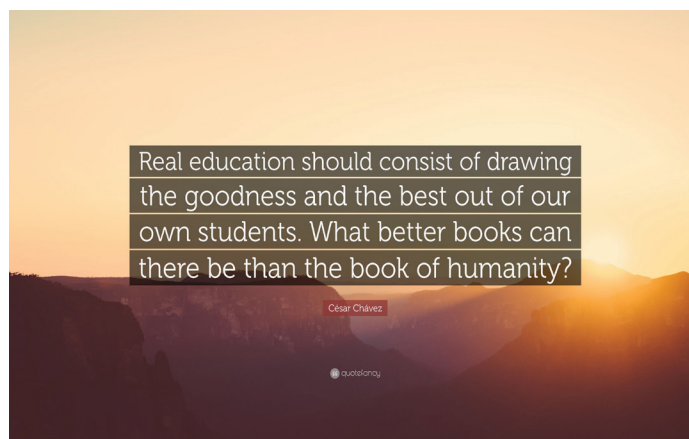
“That’s something that kind of made school fun again,” says Issac, in his L.A. Lakers jersey. He’s been playing basketball and says the “fun” parts of the school day have motivated him to show up more.

“I’m a very social person and I’m very glad that [at school] you can talk to people and just be a lot more active,” he says.

His mom says she’s seen a difference in Issac since the sports program opened up. “He’s playing basketball again, he now has friends...and it is giving him his life back.”

A life that’s starting to look much closer to normal.

Edited by: [Nicole Cohen](#)



Maternal Health Awareness Day

January 23 is Maternal Health Awareness Day

Study of wealthy nations finds American women most likely to die of preventable causes, pregnancy complications

By Virginia Langmaid, CNN, April 5, 2022

CNN — A new study found that women in the US face the highest rates of preventable and maternal mortality when compared with women in 10 other wealthy nations.

According to [data collected by the Commonwealth Fund](#) and published Tuesday, American women have an avoidable mortality rate of 198 per 100,000, the highest of any nation included in the study. The United Kingdom had the next highest rate, at 146 per 100,000.



The US also had the highest maternal mortality rate: 23.8 deaths per 100,000 live births, more than triple the rate of any other country studied. When looking only at Black maternal mortality, the rate jumped to 55.3 deaths per 100,000 live births.

By comparison, in Norway in 2019, the last year for which data was available, there were zero maternal deaths.

“A high rate of cesarean sections, inadequate prenatal care, and elevated rates of chronic illnesses like obesity, diabetes, and heart disease may be factors contributing to the high U.S. maternal mortality rate. Many maternal deaths result from missed or delayed opportunities for treatment,” the researchers wrote.

Researchers with the Commonwealth Fund pulled data from the fund’s 2020 International Health Policy Survey and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Statistics on health care were compared among Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and the US.

Among US women ages 18 to 49, just over a quarter rated their country’s health care system as good or very good. In every other country, a majority of women in this age group gave their health care system a positive rating.

US women were “significantly” more likely to report skipping or delaying medical care or to have trouble paying for care. Nearly half of women ages 18 to 49 reported having some cost-related issue in accessing health care, and more than half reported at least one problem with a medical bill.

In France, the country with the next highest rate, only 38% of women had a problem with a bill, including difficulty paying, spending time on paperwork or disputing a bill or having difficulties with insurance.

The data also showed high rates of chronic conditions and mental health needs in American women compared with those in peer nations.

The researchers recommend expanding access to affordable health care and increasing and diversifying the number of physicians in the US as possible ways to address disparities in women’s health care.

Please visit the link below for a related article.

[CDC Reports an Increase in Maternal Deaths](#)



Black History Month



Looking back on landmark legislation that shaped the educational landscape of this country



Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka was a landmark 1954 Supreme Court case in which the justices ruled unanimously that racial segregation of children in public schools was unconstitutional. *Brown v. Board of Education* was one of the cornerstones of the civil rights movement, and helped establish the precedent that “separate-but-equal” education and other services were not, in fact, equal at all.

Separate But Equal Doctrine

In 1896, the [Supreme Court](#) ruled in [Plessy v. Ferguson](#) that racially segregated public facilities were legal, so long as the facilities for Black people and whites were equal.

The ruling constitutionally sanctioned laws barring African Americans from sharing the same buses, schools and other public facilities as whites—known as [“Jim Crow” laws](#)—and established the “separate but equal” doctrine that would stand for the next six decades.

But by the early 1950s, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People ([NAACP](#)) was working hard to challenge segregation laws in public schools, and had filed lawsuits on behalf of plaintiffs in states such as [South Carolina](#), [Virginia](#) and [Delaware](#).

In the case that would become most famous, a plaintiff named Oliver Brown filed a class-action suit against the Board of Education of Topeka, [Kansas](#), in 1951, after his daughter, [Linda Brown](#), was denied entrance to Topeka’s all-white elementary schools.

In his lawsuit, Brown claimed that schools for Black children were not equal to the white schools, and that segregation violated the so-called “equal protection clause” of the [14th Amendment](#), which holds that no state can “deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

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The case went before the U.S. District Court in Kansas, which agreed that public school segregation had a “detrimental effect upon the colored children” and contributed to “a sense of inferiority,” but still upheld the “separate but equal” doctrine.

Brown v. Board of Education Verdict

When Brown’s case and four other cases related to school segregation first came before the Supreme Court in 1952, the Court combined them into a single case under the name *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*.

[Thurgood Marshall](#), the head of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, served as chief attorney for the plaintiffs. (Thirteen years later, President [Lyndon B. Johnson](#) would appoint Marshall as the first Black Supreme Court justice.)

At first, the justices were divided on how to rule on school segregation, with Chief Justice Fred M. Vinson holding the opinion that the *Plessy* verdict should stand. However, in September 1953, before *Brown v. Board of Education* was to be heard, Vinson died, and President [Dwight D. Eisenhower](#) replaced him with [Earl Warren](#), then governor of [California](#).

Displaying considerable political skill and determination, the new chief justice succeeded in engineering a unanimous verdict against school segregation the following year.

In the decision, issued on May 17, 1954, Warren wrote that “in the field of public education the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place,” as segregated schools are “inherently unequal.” As a result, the Court ruled that the plaintiffs were being “deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the 14th Amendment.”

In its verdict, the Supreme Court did not specify how exactly schools should be integrated, but asked for further arguments about it.

In May 1955, the Court issued a second opinion in the case (known as *Brown v. Board of Education II*), which remanded future desegregation cases to lower federal courts and directed district courts and school boards to proceed with desegregation “with all deliberate speed.”

Though well intentioned, the Court’s actions effectively opened the door to local judicial and political evasion of desegregation. While Kansas and some other states acted in accordance with the verdict, many school and local officials in the South defied it.

In one major example, Governor Orval Faubus of Arkansas called out the state National Guard to prevent Black students from attending high school in Little Rock in 1957. After a tense standoff, President Eisenhower deployed federal troops, and nine students—known as the “[Little Rock Nine](#)”—[were able to enter Central High School](#) under armed guard.

READ MORE: [Why Eisenhower Sent the 101st Airborne to Little Rock After Brown v. Board](#)

Impact of Brown v. Board of Education

Though the Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown v. Board* didn’t achieve school desegregation on its own, the ruling (and the steadfast resistance to it across the South) fueled the nascent [civil rights movement](#) in the United States.

In 1955, a year after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, [Rosa Parks](#) refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus. Her arrest sparked the [Montgomery bus boycott](#) and would lead to other boycotts, sit-ins and demonstrations (many of them led by [Martin Luther King Jr.](#)), in a movement that would eventually lead to the toppling of Jim Crow laws across the South.

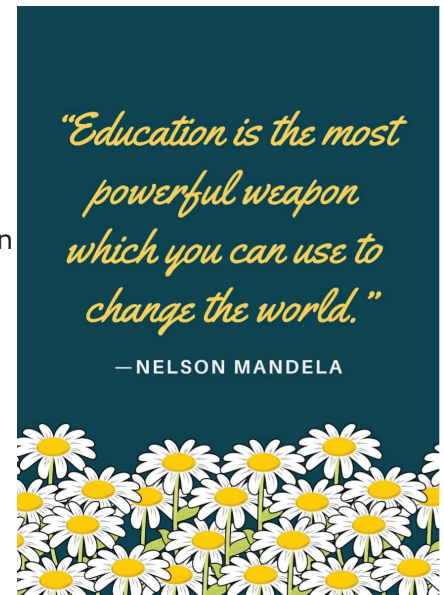
Passage of the [Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), backed by enforcement by the Justice Department, began the process of desegregation in earnest. This landmark piece of civil rights legislation was followed by the [Voting Rights Act of 1965](#) and the [Fair Housing Act of 1968](#).

In 1976, the Supreme Court issued another landmark decision in *Runyon v. McCrary*, ruling that even private, nonsectarian schools that denied admission to students on the basis of race violated federal civil rights laws.

By overturning the “separate but equal” doctrine, the Court’s decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* had set the legal precedent that would be used to overturn laws enforcing segregation in other public facilities. But despite its undoubted impact, the historic verdict fell short of achieving its primary mission of integrating the nation’s public schools.

Today, more than 60 years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, the debate continues over how to combat racial inequalities in the nation’s school system, largely based on residential patterns and differences in resources between schools in wealthier and economically disadvantaged districts across the country.

READ MORE: [How Dolls Helped Win Brown v. Board of Education](#) 




Women’s History Month





Diversity at its Best




Bella Savitzky Abzug, (July 24, 1920 – March 31, 1998) – “Battling Bella” was a Jewish U.S. Representative and [activist](#) in the 1960s and 1970s that was known for her advocate work for women and civil rights. In 1970, Abzug’s first campaign slogan was, “This woman’s place is in the house-The House of Representatives.” In 1971, Abzug joined other leading feminists such as Gloria Steinem, Shirley Chisholm, and Betty Friedan to found the National Women’s Political Caucus. It was also at Bella’s request that [Women’s Equality Day](#) was created. 




Cecilia Chung, (Born: 1965) – an immigrant from Hong Kong, and [transgender](#) activist has worked locally and internationally to advance equality and justice. She was the first transgender woman and first Asian elected to lead the Board of Directors of the San Francisco LGBT Pride Celebration. The first transgender woman and first person living openly with HIV to Chair the [San Francisco Human Rights Commission](#); and, an architect of the nation's most ambitious publicly funded program addressing economic justice within the transgender community. 

Eileen Marie Collins, (Born: 1956) – the daughter of Irish immigrants to New York, Collins was interested in [space](#) flight and becoming a pilot for most of her life. Collins became the first woman to pilot a space shuttle, when Discovery completed an eight-day mission in February 1995. That mission included the first space rendezvous with the Russian space station Mir. Collins made history again in 1999, when she commanded the Columbia, for mission [STS-93](#). She also reached the rank of colonel in the United States Air Force. 



Geraldine Anne Ferraro, (August 26, 1935 – March 26, 2011) – was a three-term congresswoman from New York and became the first woman and first Italian-American [vice-presidential candidate](#), on a national party ticket in 1984. She skipped three grades to finish high school at 16, won a college scholarship and put herself through law school. She joined the Queens County District Attorney's Office in 1974, heading the new Special Victims Bureau that dealt with sex crimes, child abuse, and domestic violence. She held a fellowship at the [Harvard Institute of Politics](#). From 1993 to 1996, she served as a member of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. 

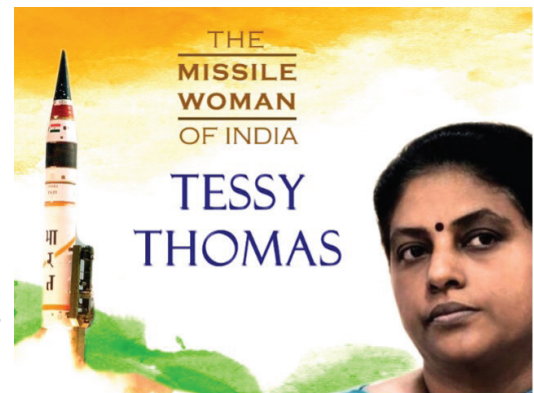
Barbara Charline Jordan (February 21, 1936 – January 17, 1996) – was an African American [lawyer](#), educator and politician. She was the first African American elected to the Texas Senate after Reconstruction and in 1971 the first Southern African American woman elected to the United States House of Representatives. She received the [Presidential Medal of Freedom](#), among numerous other honors. She was the first African American Woman buried in the Texas State Cemetery. Jordan is also known for her work as chair of the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform. 





Eva Perón, (May 7, 1919 – July 26, 1952) – was born in the small town of Los Toldos on the Argentine Pampas. She was largely responsible for the passage of the [women's](#) suffrage law and formed the Peronista Feminist Party in 1949. She liaised and distributed government allowances to construct clinics and give needy families food and other essential items. [Peron](#) also championed a policy that gave impoverished citizens access to reliable housing. She also ran the Ministries of Labor and Health, founded and ran the charitable Eva Perón Foundation. 🌐

Dr. Tessy Thomas, (Born: 1963) – is known as the Missile Woman of India. She has a Ph. D in guidance missile, is a scientist and Director General of Aeronautical Systems since 2018. She is the first woman in India to head an Indian [missile](#) project. She was the project director of the successful launch of the [Agni-IV](#) missile project-a career milestone. She is a fellow at the Indian National Academy of Engineering (INAE), Institution of Engineers-India (IEI) and Tata Administrative Service. 🌐



Susan Diane Wojcicki, (Born: 1968) – is a Polish-American business [executive](#) who was the CEO of YouTube from 2014 to [2023](#). Her net worth was estimated at \$765 million in 2022. Wojcicki has worked in the technology industry for over twenty years. She became involved in the creation of Google in 1998 when she rented out her garage as an office to the company's founders. She worked as Google's first marketing manager in 1999, and later led the company's online advertising business and original video service. After observing the success of YouTube, she suggested that Google should buy it; the deal was approved for \$1.65 billion in 2006. 🌐

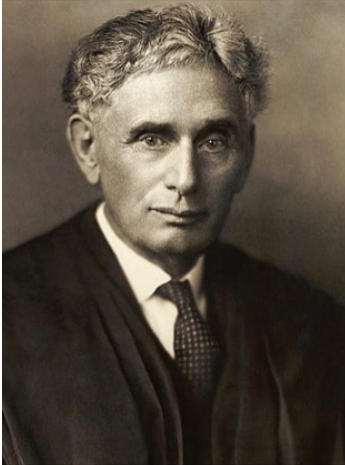
Malala Yousafzai (Born: 1968) – is a Muslim female education [activist](#) and the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Awarded when she was 17, she is the world's youngest Nobel Prize laureate, and the second Pakistani and the first Pashtun to receive a Nobel Prize. She is known for human rights advocacy, especially the education of women and children in her native homeland of Swat, where the [Pakistani Taliban](#) had at times banned girls from attending school. Her advocacy has grown into an international movement, and according to former Prime Minister Shahid Khaga Abbasi, she has become Pakistan's "most prominent citizen." 🌐



"We must reject not only the stereotypes that others have of us but also those that we have of ourselves." **Shirley Chisholm**, First African American woman elected to the U.S. Congress in 1968. 🌐

Supreme Court Firsts

Honoring six historical Associate Justices of the United States Supreme Court, established in 1789. It is the highest court in the land and the only part of the federal judiciary specifically required by the Constitution



Louis Dembitz Brandeis (November 13, 1856 – October 5, 1941) was an American lawyer and first Jewish male who served on the [Supreme Court of the United States](#) from 1916 to 1939. In 1916, He was nominated by President [Woodrow Wilson](#). His nomination was bitterly contested and tinged with anti-semitism, partly because, as Justice [William O. Douglas](#) later wrote, “Brandeis was a militant crusader for social justice whoever his opponent might be.” 🔄



Joan Ruth Bader Ginsburg (March 15, 1933 – September 18, 2020) was an American lawyer and jurist who served in the Supreme Court from 1993 until her death in 2020. Ginsburg was the first Jewish woman and the second woman to serve on the Court, after [Sandra Day O'Connor](#). She was nominated by President [Bill Clinton](#) to replace retiring justice [Byron White](#). She eventually became part of the [liberal wing](#) of the Court as the Court shifted to the right over time. 🔄



Ketanji Onyika Brown Jackson (born September 14, 1970) is an American jurist who serves on the Supreme Court. Jackson was nominated to the High Court by President [Joe Biden](#) on February 25, 2022. She is the first African-American woman to serve on the High Court. She was [confirmed](#) by the United States Senate on April 7, 2022, and sworn into office on June 30. She was previously a [United States circuit judge](#) of the [United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit](#) from 2021 to 2022. 🔄



Thurgood Marshall (July 2, 1908 – January 24, 1993) was an American civil rights lawyer and jurist who served on the Supreme Court from 1967 until 1991. He was the Supreme Court's first African-American justice. He was an attorney who fought for civil rights, leading the [NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund](#). Marshall was a prominent figure in the movement to end [racial segregation](#). He won 29 of the 32 civil rights cases he argued before the Supreme Court. President [Lyndon B. Johnson](#) nominated Marshall to the Supreme Court in 1967. A staunch liberal, he frequently dissented as the Court became increasingly conservative. 🔄



Sandra Day O'Connor (born March 26, 1930) is an American retired attorney and politician who served as the first female [associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States](#) from 1981 to 2006. She was both the first woman nominated and the first confirmed to the court. Nominated by President [Ronald Reagan](#), she was considered a [swing vote](#) for the [Rehnquist Court](#) and the first five months of the [Roberts Court](#). 🔄



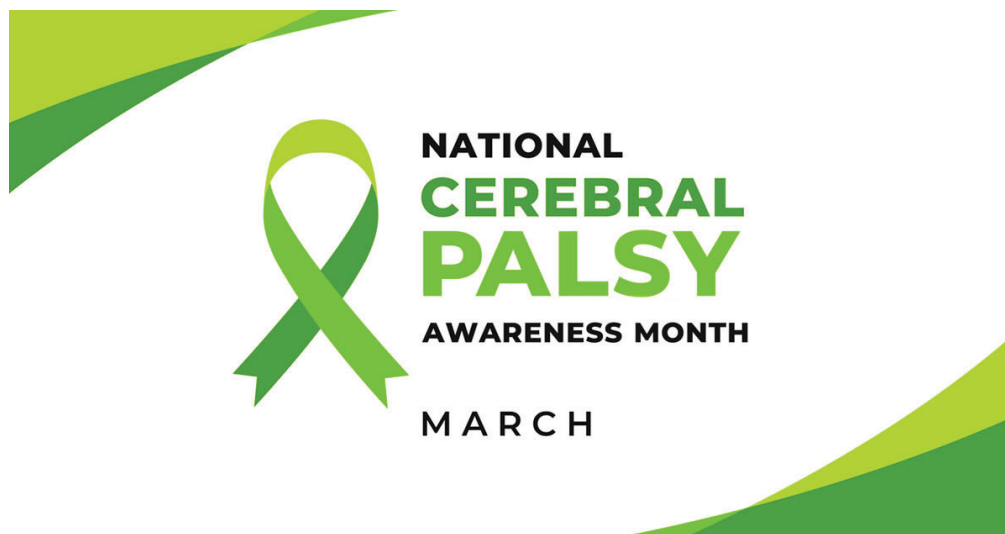
Sonia Maria Sotomayor (born June 25, 1954) is an American lawyer and jurist who serves on the Supreme Court. She was [nominated](#) by President [Barack Obama](#) on May 26, 2009, and has served since August 8, 2009. She is the third woman, first woman of color, and first Latina to serve on the Supreme Court. Prior to the Supreme Court, Sotomayor was nominated to the [U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York](#) by President [George H. W. Bush](#) in 1991; confirmation followed in 1992. 🔄



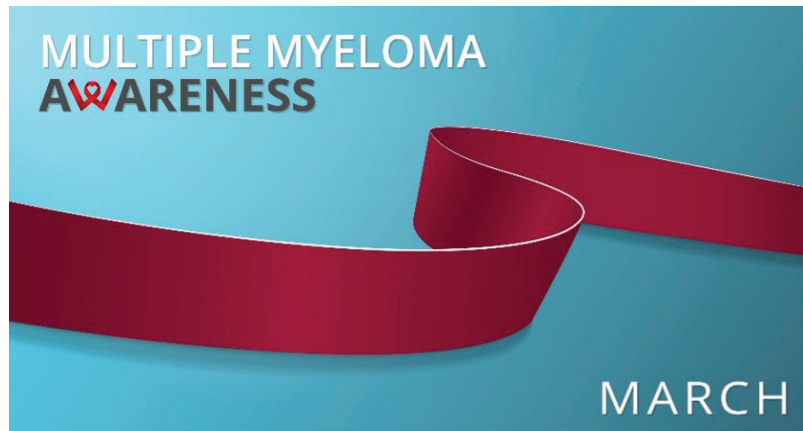
Health Corner



During American Heart Month, we raise awareness of the risks of heart disease, remember those we have lost, and highlight steps we can all take to save the lives of countless loved ones and address the unequal burden of heart disease in high-risk communities. Heart disease is a leading cause of death in the United States, claiming the lives of more than 650,000 [men](#) and [women](#) each year.🔗



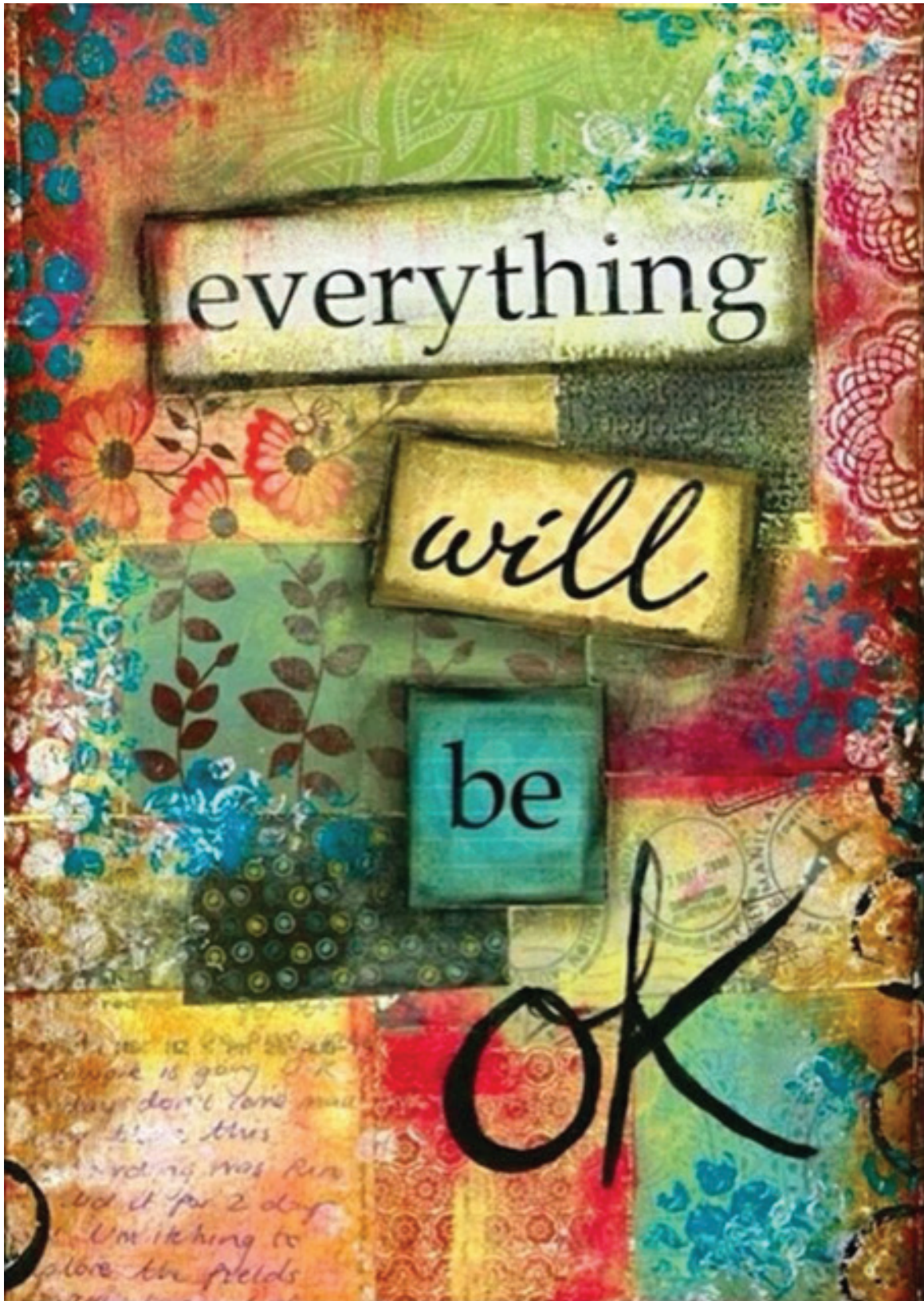
During the month of March, individuals living with cerebral palsy, as well as family members and activists, come together to advocate for the cerebral palsy community. Cerebral Palsy is a permanent disability that affects a person's mobility and muscle strength. According to the Centers for Disease Control's website, about 1 in 323 children have Cerebral Palsy (CP), making it the most common [disability](#) in childhood.🔗



The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) is at the forefront of the fight against myeloma. We have seen significant progress over the past decade, with new therapies resulting in better overall survival. The American Cancer Society's estimates for [multiple myeloma](#) in the United States for 2023 are about 35,730 new cases will be diagnosed (19,860 in men and 15,870 in women).🙏



Positivity Poster



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Days of Reflection

Influencing Our Humanity



January 11—Human Trafficking Awareness Day--is dedicated to raising awareness of sexual slavery and human trafficking worldwide. Today, there are between 21-30 million people enslaved in the world, more than at any time in human history. Every day, modern slavery can be recognized: children become soldiers; young women are forced into prostitution and migrant workers exploited in the workforce. Human Trafficking Awareness Day seeks to end this slavery, return rights to individuals and make the world a safer place for all inhabitants. 🌐



January 16—Martin Luther King Day--celebrates the life and accomplishments of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. MLK promoted Civil Rights through nonviolent civil disobedience. He was assassinated in 1968. Martin Luther King, Jr. day became a federally recognized holiday in 1983. The first year this holiday was observed was 1986, and not by all states. In 2000, it became a nationally observed holiday in all states. Martin Luther King Jr. Day is observed annually on the third Monday of January. 🌐



January 27—Commemoration of Victims of the Holocaust--is a day commemorating the millions of Jews and minority groups who were murdered by the Nazis during the Holocaust in the 1930s and 40s. The Holocaust, a systematic and state-planned program to kill millions of Jews and other minority groups in Europe, was one of the most horrific genocides in history with an estimated 11 million lives lost. The purpose of the day is to encourage discussion of this difficult subject in order to make sure that it never happens again. 🌐



March 1—Zero Discrimination Day--aims to celebrate individuality, inclusion and human rights while promoting tolerance, compassion and peace. Discrimination refers to the selective practice of unfairly treating a person or a group of people differently than others due to factors such as religion, gender, race, sexuality, age, or disability. Despite laws and education, discrimination continues to be a widespread problem throughout the world. 🌐

Special Days

Diversity in the Carisk Community



March 6—Purim -- is a Jewish Holiday, which commemorates Jewish people being saved from extermination in Persia. The story of Purim comes from the Biblical book of Esther. In it, Haman, a high-ranking advisor to King Ahasuerus, sought to kill all Jews in ancient Persia. He is motivated by an incident in which Mordechai, a Jewish leader, defied the king's orders and refused to bow to Haman. Haman is stopped through the actions of Mordechai and his niece Esther, a beautiful and courageous Jewish woman. Esther initially disguises her Jewish Identity and eventually becomes Queen.🔗



March 17—St. Patrick's Day -- observes the death of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. The day commemorates Saint Patrick and the arrival of Christianity in Ireland, and over time, the holiday has evolved into a fun and festive celebration of Irish culture with parades, special foods, music, dancing, drinking and a whole lot of green.🔗



Mar 22-April 20—Ramadan -- is the holiest month in the Islamic calendar. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims abstain from eating and drinking from sunrise to sunset. It is said God decreed this entire month holy for Muslims so that they can increase their remembrance of life after death. Muslims also abstain from all bad deeds and habits, like smoking, swearing, backbiting, and disrespectfulness. Muslims reflect upon themselves, their religion, and the characteristics of God. Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam and as such, it is obligatory for Muslims. Fasting and abstaining from bad habits allow Muslims to learn self-control, humility, and generosity. Unlike the fast of Ashurah, the fasts of Ramadan are declared mandatory by God because like salah (praying towards Mecca), fasting helps Muslims maintain spiritual and physical health.🔗



April 5-April 13—Passover -- is a Jewish festival that celebrates the Israelites fleeing from Egypt about 3,300 years ago. Passover is called such because the Israelites marked their doorframes with a sign. It is believed that because of this sign, God passed over their houses during the plague of the firstborn.🔗



April 7—Good Friday -- commemorates the day that Jesus was crucified. Following Jesus' arrest, he was found guilty of proclaiming himself to be the King of Jews. He was sentenced to crucifixion. This day is celebrated a number of ways. These include taking down the cross in the Orthodox faith to recounting the story of Jesus' last days, which is called the Passion of Christ.🙏



April 9—Easter -- commemorates Jesus' resurrection three days after his crucifixion and death. Following his death, he was removed from the cross and buried in a tomb. On Sunday, Jesus' tomb was found empty. Angels informed onlookers that Jesus had risen. Throughout the next 40 days, Jesus appeared to his apostles and disciples before finally ascending to heaven. Easter is the highest and holiest holiday in the Christian faith.🙏

Diversity Highlight

Holi, as Remembered by Sunita

March 8, 2023



This holiday changes dates from year to year because it corresponds with the twelfth month of Phalguna in the Hindu calendar, which is actually a network of calendars tied to lunar and solar cycles. It celebrates the triumph of good over evil and the changing of the seasons from winter to spring.

It is one of the most celebrated festivals of India. It is also known as Festival of Colors. On the day of Holi people play with colors with their friends. Each color also carries a meaning. Red symbolizes love and fertility; yellow is the color of turmeric, a powder native to India and used as a natural remedy; blue represents the Hindu God Krishna; and green is for new beginnings.

It is also sometimes called, "festival of love". It celebrates the eternal and divine love of god Radha Krishna. On this

day people get to unite together forgetting all resentments and all types of bad feelings towards each other.

The ritual starts by lighting up the bonfire one day before the day of Holi and this process symbolizes the triumph of good over the bad.

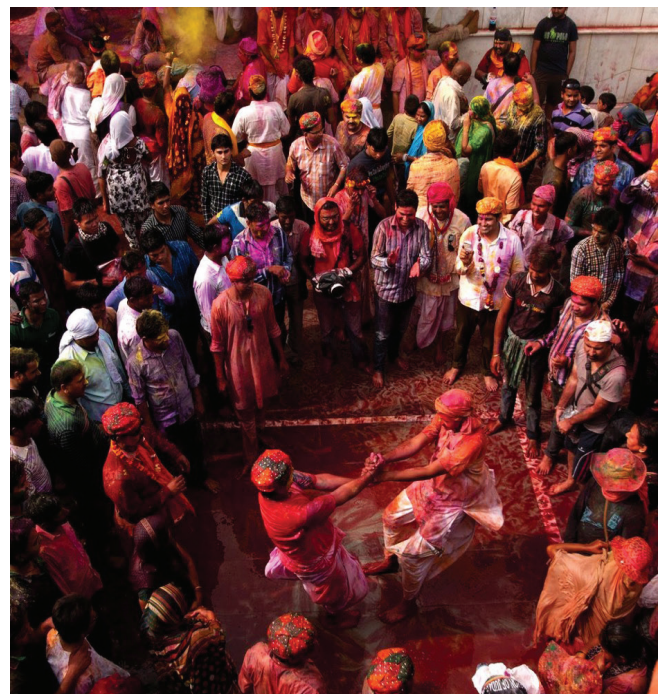
Hindus cook special foods and each region has its own specialty. I remember growing up it was one of the most anticipated festivals. My mother would start preparing for it days in advance. She would make “Papri”. It’s kind of like matzah made with gram flour, mustard oil, fenugreek leaves and other spices and is deep-fried. Another favorite is Gujia – it’s a kind of a sweet empanada. People put all kinds of stuffing in it. My Mom would stuff it with Khoya – which is kind of a cross between condensed milk and ricotta cheese. She would add flavor elements like cardamom, coconut and nuts of choice.

Another specialty is kanji, which is a fermented drink. It can have a base of vegetables like carrot, green beans, cauliflower. My Mom used to make it with fried fritters or vada’s. It is probiotic in nature and helps with the digestion of all the rich food one eats during this festival.

On the Day of Holi, we wore clothes that we didn’t mind getting trashed because we played with colored powder and water. Our home was like an open house and our doors were open to anyone that wanted to come – family, friends, neighbors. Because my Mom was such a fabulous cook and my father so hospitable and made the most fun cocktails, we would get more and more people - friend of friends, relatives and so on and so forth. We had tons of food – kofta (ground goat meatballs in spicy sauce), kaleji and liver and other organ meat in a very special curry sauce, peas and of course kanji, papri and gujia’s.

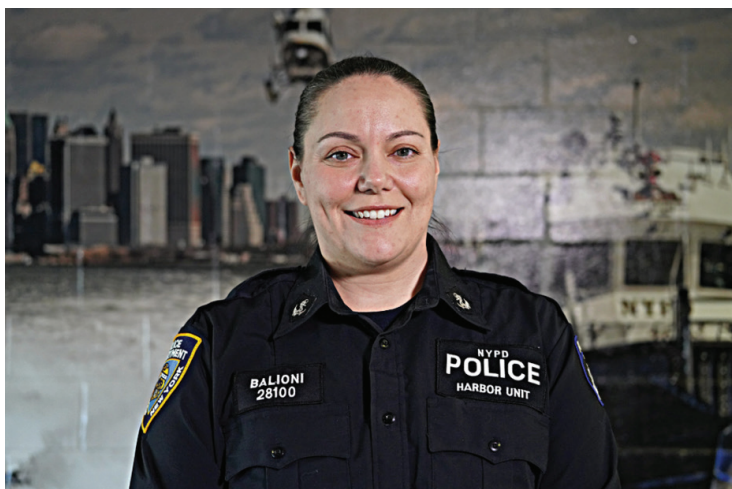
When I got married and came to New Jersey Indian groceries were not that easily accessible and one had to go to New York to get them. Therefore, I could not prepare a full-blown typical Holi spread but always made it a special day by cooking a celebratory Indian meal and celebrated with family and friends. Now of course Indian groceries are not an issue and there is a plethora of Indian grocery stores all over. Even local grocery stores carry Indian spices, pickles, frozen food, naans, etc. Now that my generation is getting older, we go to fairs where they have cultural events and all kind of food stalls or meet up at an Indian restaurant where they serve a special meal for Holi.

On this very special holiday, we wish all of our friends and family a very Happy Holi with vibrant colors and new beginnings....🌸



One of Our Own

Hats off and three cheers for Sally's sister-in-law, Dianna Balioni



Police Officer Dianna Balioni at the Harbor Station House, Photo by Dean Moses

Mar 18, 2022 — NEW YORK CITY -- In honor of Women's History Month, we are looking at some trailblazing women in the male-dominated units in the NYPD. The Harbor Unit has only six women, including Sergeant Laura McCormack and Officer Dianna Balioni, and their presence makes a significant difference working on the job. McCormack, currently the only citywide supervisor for the NYPD Harbor Unit, is the eyes of New York City's waterways. Balioni is the first female officer to pilot the unit's 45'x14'7" response boat-medium C (RBM C).

Please visit the link below to learn more about this exciting news.

[Balioni Takes the Helm](#) 

Did You Know?

The Karnofsky family, Jewish immigrants from Lithuania decided to help a 7-year-old boy and brought him to their home.

There he stayed and spent the night with this family. When he went to bed, Mrs. Karnofsky sang him Russian lullabies, which he sang with her.

Later he learned to sing and play several Russian and Jewish songs.

Over time, this boy became a member of this family.

Mr. Karnofsky gave him money to buy his first musical instrument, as was the custom in Jewish families.

Later, when he became a professional musician and composer, he used these Jewish melodies in compositions such as St. James's Hospital and Go Down Moses.

The little boy grew up and wrote a book about the [Karnofsky Family](#).

In memory of this family and until the end of his life, he wore the Star of David and said that in this family he learned "to live a real life and determination."

This little boy's name was Louis Armstrong and was called Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong. Louis Armstrong proudly spoke fluent Yiddish and "Satchmo" is Yiddish for "big cheeks, a nickname some say was given to him by Mrs. Karnofsky!

Please visit the link below to hear Louis Armstrong in his own words:


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TBqhGEU4FA> 




Trailblazers and Icons

BREAKING THE GLASS CEILINGS AND OPENING NEW DOORS




Rita Moreno, first [Latina](#) to win an Emmy, Grammy, Tony and Oscar (EGOT). 



Sidney Poitier, first [Black](#) man to win an Academy Award for Best Actor. 



Barbara Walters, first [female](#) anchor on an evening news program. 

Diversity Poster



Sports Corner

The 1960s Packers: A product of Vince Lombardi's prejudice-free culture

Cliff Christl

Packers Team Historian

Feb 04, 2021 at 10:21 AM



Emlen Tunnell is welcomed into the Packer fold by Vince Lombardi

“The time is always right to do what is right.” **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

When Lombardi was hired by the Packers in late January 1959, he essentially inherited one Black player, defensive end Nate Borden. He made it clear that was going to change when he acquired safety Emlen Tunnell from the New York Giants almost five months later to the day. Lombardi had been a Giants assistant coach the previous five seasons, while Tunnell had played for the Giants for 11 years and held the NFL record for career interceptions with 74.

Less than a month later, in his first speech to his new team, Lombardi declared he would not tolerate players who harbored racial prejudices. He also had announced on the eve of camp that his first priority was to “defeat the attitude of defeatism” that was obviously prevalent following the Packers’ 1-10-1 finish the previous year.

Between April 1963 and May 1964, Lombardi also dumped his last three players who hadn’t bought into his preaching about diversity.

It was in the early 1960s when Lombardi informed restaurant and bar owners in Green Bay that if they didn’t serve his Black players, he would put their establishments off limits to all of his players. In other words, he threatened them with a boycott, when having Packers as customers could be a magnet for even bigger crowds.

Around the same time, Lombardi was also looking to pull the Packers out of exhibition games in the Deep South. In 1961, before their game against Washington in Columbus, Ga., Lombardi took his strongest stand yet to keep his team together.

The game’s sponsors wanted both teams to arrive early and help promote the city’s first professional football game. Washington agreed and flew into Muscogee County Airport six days before the game. It practiced in Columbus

all week, providing the local newspapers with plenty of copy for daily stories leading up to the game. Lombardi refused to comply because of the South's Jim Crow laws.

The Packers flew into Lawson Army Airfield the day before the game, stayed together – whites and blacks – at the bachelor officers' quarters at Fort Benning, a U.S. Army post located almost 10 miles outside Columbus, and held a practice and clinic there for the doughboys. As a result, the game drew a disappointing crowd of 18,000, about 6,500 below capacity.

After playing in Columbus and staying at Fort Benning again in 1962, Lombardi refused to approve a segregated seating plan at Memorial Stadium and canceled a third game in late July 1963. With Washington's approval, the game was moved on short notice to Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Lombardi also stepped into Wisconsin's heated and prolonged political battle over a fair housing act. In 1960, when his Black players were having trouble finding places to live, Lombardi approached local real estate developer and human rights advocate Norman Miller in search of a solution to the problem. Both then worked together to get a fair housing bill passed in Wisconsin, despite fierce opposition from the real estate industry, Milwaukee-area Democrats and most Republicans. In April 1965, prior to a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, Lombardi submitted a written endorsement of the bill.

"On the football field or the baseball diamond, players are judged not on their race or religion but by their performance and this is as it should be," Lombardi wrote. "Since I so firmly believe in equality of opportunity in athletics, I think the same degree of opportunity should prevail in other areas as well."

The committee voted 5-0 to reject what many considered a watered-down version of the bill that would have banned discrimination in the sale and rental of housing properties in Wisconsin. However, later that year, a bill finally passed with bipartisan support in the state Legislature and was signed by Republican Gov. Warren Knowles. In the early stages of that political tug-of-war, Lombardi also told his players that he considered Packers fans to be hypocrites, only caring about them as football players.

"Lombardi was very bothered," Davis said in the book, "Lombardi's Left Side." "He said, 'It's just a shame that the people want and expect you to come and play, and the next minute they almost don't care enough to find a place for you (to live).'"

In 1961, when Lombardi won his first title, there were roughly 30 Black players in the league and the Packers had two Black starters. By 1967, one-quarter of the players in the NFL were Black, or more than 150.

The Packers were clearly at the vanguard of this sea change. "If you're black or white, you're a part of the family," Lombardi told Olsen. "We make no issue over a man's color. I just won't tolerate anybody in this organization, coach or player, making it an issue. We respect every man's dignity, black or white."

Lombardi's record speaks for itself. No coach in National Football History achieved more success in less time than Lombardi did during his nine seasons in Green Bay. He led the Packers to three straight and five total NFL championships in seven years, in addition to winning the first two Super Bowls at the conclusion of the 1966 and 1967 NFL seasons.

It is not surprising that the winner of the Super Bowl is presented with the NFL's ultimate prize: The Vince Lombardi Trophy.

"The sign of a true hero is someone who does what is right, before it is popular to do so." **Anabel Rawlins**

To read the entire article please visit the link below:

[The 1960s Packers-a-Product of Vince-Lombardi's Prejudice Free Culture](#) 

Carisk Café

“Cooking is all about people. Food is maybe the only universal thing that really has the power to bring everyone together. No matter what culture, everywhere around the world, people eat together.

Guy Fieri, American Restaurateur

We are pleased to announce that our Multicultural Spring Festival was a phenomenal success.

Our patrons had a fantastic time as they enjoyed delicious food celebrating our different cultures. Our amazing and courageous came dressed in awesome 80's attire and danced to a fabulous 80's playlist, which included the Bee Gees, Celia Cruz and the Commodores. There were parachute pants and leg warmers everywhere, along with a boom box in every corner.

The crowd went crazy when Bruce Springsteen, MC Hammer, and Santana all made guest appearances.

Everyone wanted the [recipes](#) from the endless food stations because they could not have just “one” of anything. We were fortunate to have multiple desert options because the “strawberry daiquiri cupcakes” laced with white rum disappeared in the blink of an eye.

Have a safe and sensational spring. 🌸

