

[Link](#) to Acknowledgement Monthly Themes

June 2024

LBGTQ+ Pride Month

So many things to acknowledge this month...like making it through (almost) another school year! We are highlighting LBGTQ+ Pride for the month of June and wanted to share local and national resources to learn more...

[Gender Spectrum](#)

Gender Spectrum's mission is to create a gender-inclusive world for all children and youth. To accomplish this, we help families, organizations, and institutions increase their understanding of gender and consider the implications that evolving views have for each of us.

[GLSEN](#)

As GLSEN was founded by a group of teachers in 1990, we knew that educators play key roles in creating affirming learning environments for LBGTQ+ youth. But as well as activating supportive educators, we believe in centering and uplifting student-led movements, which have powered initiatives like the Day of Silence, Ally Week, and more. Find lesson plans, professional development, networks, etc.

[GLAAD](#)

Founded in 1985, GLAAD is a non-profit organization focused on LBGTQ advocacy and cultural change. GLAAD works to ensure fair, accurate, and inclusive representation and creates national and local programs that advance LBGTQ acceptance. Serving as a storyteller, media force, resource, and advocate, GLAAD tackles tough issues and provokes dialogue so that authentic LBGTQ stories are seen, heard, and actualized. GLAAD strives to protect all that has been accomplished and helps create a world where everyone can live the life they love.

[Out in the Open](#)

Out in the Open connects rural LBGTQ+ people to build community, visibility, knowledge and power. We are a multiracial, majority working class, grassroots movement and capacity building organization based in Wabanaki territory in Windham County, Vermont and Waldo County, Maine.

[Outright Vermont](#)

Vermont's only queer youth service organization. Its mission is to build a Vermont where all LBGTQ+ (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning) youth have hope, equity and power. Find zines, tools, parent & caregiver group, [toolkit for parents & caregivers](#), [online learning modules](#)

[PFLAG](#)

PFLAG is the nation's largest organization dedicated to supporting, educating, and advocating for LBGTQ+ people and those who love them.

[The Trevor Project](#)

The Trevor Project is the leading suicide prevention and crisis intervention nonprofit organization for LGBTQ+ young people. We provide information & support to LGBTQ+ young people 24/7, all year round.

[TLC Rural Outright](#)

Rural Outright partners with the LGBTQ+ community to promote health and wellness through connections to [community resources](#) and strong social networks. Based in Claremont & Lebanon NH

[Trans Student Educational Resources](#)

Youth-led organization dedicated to transforming the educational environment for trans and gender non-conforming students through advocacy and empowerment. Founded in 2011, it is the only national organization led by trans youth.

Additional Resources:

[A Map of Gender Diverse Cultures](#) - Explore PBS's interactive map to learn about thriving cultures that have recognized, revered, and integrated more than two genders.

[Creating Safer Spaces for LGBTQ Youth](#) - toolkit for education, healthcare, and community based organizations

[Hope in a Box](#) - LGBTQ-inclusive curricula, training, and mentorship for K-12 educators. Together, we use literature to cultivate empathy and ensure every LGBTQ student feels safe, welcome, and included at school.

[Opening the Door To Your LGBTQIA+ Students](#) - 9-min video created by Teaching Tolerance & Outright VT

[The Safe Zone Project](#) - Free online resource for powerful, effective LGBTQ awareness and ally training workshops

[Rights, Respect, Responsibility](#) - teacher's guide supplement for students with disabilities

[Some Common Myths About Gender](#) - one page overview

[Trans-Affirming Schools Project Resource Guide](#) - The purpose of this guide is to equip K-12 educators with resources to build safer, more affirming school environments

[Understanding the Complexities of Gender: Sam Killermann at TEDxUoflChicago](#) - 15-min

National Museum of African American History and Culture - [Juneteenth](#), [digital toolkit](#)

On June 19, 1865, nearly two years after President Abraham Lincoln emancipated enslaved Africans in America, Union troops arrived in Galveston Bay, Texas with news of freedom. More than 250,000 African Americans embraced freedom by executive decree in what became known as [Juneteenth](#) or Freedom Day. With the principles of self-determination, citizenship, and democracy magnifying their hopes and dreams, those Texans held fast to the promise of true liberty for all.

From [VT Digger](#): In 2007, Vermont designated the third Saturday in June as "Juneteenth National Freedom Day." If approved, the bill under consideration in the Senate would set the date on June 19.

Additional June themes:

- [Black Music Month](#)

- [Immigrant Heritage Month](#)
- June 5: [World Environment Day](#)
- June 12: [Loving Day](#)
- June 16: [Eid al-Adha](#) (Muslim)
- June 18: [International Day of Countering Hate Speech](#)
- June 19: [Juneteenth](#)
- June 28: [Pride Day/Stonewall Riots Anniversary](#)

May 2024

Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Please join us in celebrating Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in May. At WSESU, we recognize that no one group is a monolith, and that there are complexities within and between diverse groups, even among the groups being acknowledged this month. We want to explore the histories and present day contributions of all Asian Americans along with an understanding of the challenges, prejudices and racism they have and continue to endure. We encourage you to join us this month and beyond in uplifting the stories, perspectives and experiences of Asian Americans and working together to truly build a culture of belonging in our schools and communities.

From the Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC):

Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month is observed annually in May to celebrate the contributions that generations of AANHPIs have made to American history, society, and culture...the theme for the May 2024 observance of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month is **Advancing Leaders Through Innovation**.

From the [USDA](#): This heritage month originated in June 1977, when Representatives Frank Horton of New York and Norman Mineta of California called upon the President to proclaim the first 10 days of May as Asian-Pacific Heritage Week. In October 1978, President Jimmy Carter expanded the observance as an annual celebration; and, 12 years later President George H.W. Bush extended the week-long celebration to a month. The official designation of May as AAPI Heritage Month was signed into law in 1992. The month of May was chosen to observe AAPI for several reasons, including to commemorate the first Japanese who came to the country in May of 1843, and to mark the May 1869 completion of the Transcontinental Railroad which involved the labor of many Chinese immigrants. The AANHPI community is made up of culturally and linguistically - diverse people, representing populations from many countries and islands.

The [National Archives](#) holds a wealth of material documenting the Asian and Pacific Islander experience, and it highlights these resources online, in programs, and through traditional and social media.

Resources:

- <https://www.asianpacificheritage.gov/>
- [Brave Little State - What's the Asian American Experience Like in Vermont?](#)

- [Asian American Perspectives](#)
- ["Voices Uplifted": The interview series](#)
- [Outdoor Asian - Vermont](#)
- [Asian Americans: The Vermont Experience - A Virtual Event](#)
- [Asian Cultural Center of Vermont](#)
- [Asian American Stories of Resilience and Beyond](#)
- [AAPI Youth Rising](#)

For teachers:

- <https://www.asianpacificheritage.gov/ForTeachers.html>
- [Asian Americans in the People's History of the United States](#)
- [Free Learning Resources to Celebrate Asian American Heritage](#)
- [Teaching Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage](#)
- [Asian American and Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander Heritage Lesson Plans](#)
- [Native Hawaiian Sovereignty Movement](#)

Additional May themes:

- [Mental Health Awareness Month](#)
- [Jewish-American Heritage Month](#)
- [Haitian Heritage Month](#)
- [Older Americans Month](#)
- [Vermont Inclusion Week](#) (2nd week of May)
- May 5: [Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women](#)
- May 17: [International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia](#)
- May 31-June 1: [Tulsa Race Massacre](#)

April 2024

Abilities Awareness Month

This April, we are combining Disability History and Awareness Month (October), Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month (March), Autism Awareness/Acceptance Month (April), and Disability Pride Month (July), to acknowledge and share resources about a broad scope (physical, sensory, neurodivergent, intellectual) of abilities/disabilities as part of our commitment to cultivating a WSESU culture of belonging.

<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgg/students-with-disabilities#1> - add images

People with disabilities are individuals with families, jobs, hobbies, likes and dislikes, and problems and joys. While their disability is integral to their identity, it does not define them. They are individuals, not inspirations or victims.

[From the Disability Etiquette Guide:](#)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a person with a disability as *someone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a history or record of such an impairment, or is perceived by others as having such an impairment.*

Here are some tips that cover what often goes overlooked in everyday life:

Ask before you help. Don't assume that because a person has a disability, they need help. Usually, they will ask if they need assistance. If you offer and they accept, follow their instructions. They know their capabilities.

Do not touch, pat or grab. No one wants to be touched without consent, including people with disabilities. Do not touch, grab, or guide them or their wheelchair, scooter or cane without permission. Remember that people with disabilities consider their equipment or service animals as part of their personal space.

Speak directly to the person with a disability. Also, while striking up a conversation is great, remember that most people, including those with disabilities, would rather not discuss their bodies or medical history with people they just met.

Avoid making assumptions. People with disabilities are the best judge of what they can or cannot do. Remember, it could violate the ADA in many situations to exclude people from an activity because of their disability.

Be open to requests for access or accommodation. Nurturing an equitable, inclusive society is up to all of us. Ensuring your business is accessible and committing to reasonable accommodations upon request not only complies with anti-discrimination laws but also showcases excellent customer service and dedication to all members of your community.

Terminology Tips Language constantly evolves, including how people with disabilities prefer to be presented or spoken about. Here are two respectful models for speaking about people with disabilities:

- **Identity-First Language:** Many advocates assert that being disabled is as natural as any other identity, on par with gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, or race. Identity-first language arose from a growing number of Autistics, with a capital A, who view autism as a positive, natural part of who they are. Also, the Deaf community historically refers to itself as Deaf with a capital D. However, there is not yet consensus among all disability groups to adopt identity-first language.
- **Person-First Language:** As the disability movement came into its own after the passage of the ADA, advocates asserted that individuals with disabilities are people first, equal and deserving of the same rights and treatments as everyone else. "Person-first" language was born from our movement's early days. Say "person with a disability" and "people with disabilities." For specific disabilities, saying "person with a spinal cord injury" or "person with cerebral palsy" is considered respectful. Similarly, say "wheelchair user" or "person who uses a wheelchair." People are not bound or confined to their wheelchairs, after all. A wheelchair is a tool that enables the person to get around and participate in society; it's liberating, not confining.
- While it is OK to interchange identity-first and person-first, it is best to take the lead from the disabled person or group you are interacting with. Chances are, you won't need to

choose either speaking style and can simply call them by their names. Words to avoid: Avoid negative, disempowering words like “victim” or “sufferer.”

Reflection Questions:

- What assumptions am I making about someone's abilities/disabilities?
- Where are the barriers to access in my classroom, school and community?
- What do I need to know in order to support access and safety?
- How can I anticipate and remove barriers while ensuring personal autonomy and dignity?
- Where are my own learning edges to stretch and grow where I experience discomfort?

Resources:

- <https://www.mobilitypluscolorado.com/blog/disability-awareness-days>
- <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/>
- <https://impact-the-conversation.captivate.fm/>
- <https://allbrainsbelong.org/>
- <https://www.unitedspinal.org/pdf/DisabilityEtiquette.pdf>
- <https://askearn.org/page/disability-etiquette>

Inclusive Language:

- [APA Inclusive Language Guide](#)
- [Ableist Language To Avoid and Alternative Phrases](#)
- [Disability Masterdoc](#)
- [The Asian Americans with Disabilities Resource Guide](#)

Teaching Resources:

- <https://educators4sc.org/teaching-about-disability/>
- <https://hiehelpcenter.org/disability-awareness-class-lessons/>
- <https://www.disabilityequalityeducation.org/k-2>
- <https://www.learningforjustice.org/search?query=disability>

Additional April themes & acknowledgements:

- Genocide Awareness Month
- [Arab-American Heritage Month](#)
- April 1-5: [Vermont Holocaust Education Week](#)
- April 2: World Autism Awareness Day
- April 12: [Day of \(No\) Silence](#)
- April 22: Earth Day
- April 22-30: Passover

March 2024

National Women's History Month

From the [National Women's History Museum](#):

Every year, March is designated Women's History Month by presidential proclamation. The month is set aside to honor women's contributions in American history.

Did You Know? Women's History Month started as Women's History Week . . .

Women's History Month began as a local celebration in Santa Rosa, California. The Education Task Force of the Sonoma County (California) Commission on the Status of Women planned and executed a "Women's History Week" celebration in 1978. The organizers selected the week of March 8 to correspond with International Women's Day. The movement spread across the country as other communities initiated their own Women's History Week celebrations the following year.

In 1980, a consortium of women's groups and historians—led by the National Women's History Project (now the National Women's History Alliance)—successfully lobbied for national recognition. In February 1980, President Jimmy Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation declaring the Week of March 8th 1980 as National Women's History Week.

Subsequent Presidents continued to proclaim a National Women's History Week in March until 1987 when Congress passed Public Law 100-9, designating March as "Women's History Month." Between 1988 and 1994, Congress passed additional resolutions requesting and authorizing the President to proclaim March of each year as Women's History Month. Since 1995, each president has issued an annual proclamations designating the month of March as "Women's History Month."

The [National Women's History Month's](#) theme for 2024 celebrates "Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion." The theme recognizes women throughout the country who understand that, for a positive future, we need to eliminate bias and discrimination entirely from our lives and institutions.

Women from every background have long realized that an uneven playing field will never bring equality or justice. Many feel the critical need to speak up and work harder for fairness in our institutions and social interactions.

During 2024, we recognize the example of women who are committed to embracing everyone and excluding no one in our common quest for freedom and opportunity. They know that people change with the help of families, teachers and friends, and that young people in particular need to learn the value of hearing from different voices with different points of view as they grow up.

Resource Spotlight: [Black Feminist Future - Fractals](#)

Black Feminist Future (BFF) is a political hub focused on the dynamic possibilities of galvanizing the social and political power of Black women, girls, and gender-expansive people toward liberation. BFF created Fractals to highlight the distinct path of Black feminisms in the U.S. as a fractal, or "a never-ending pattern, infinitely complex and self-similar across different scales"

The use of fractals suggests that Black feminisms continue to build on themselves—changing, responding, and learning from their past.

Follow these links to learn more:

<https://www.womenshistory.org/womens-history/womens-history-month>

<https://www.womenshistorymonth.gov/>

<https://nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org/2024-whm-theme/>

<https://www.cliohistory.org/click/>

<https://fractals.blackfeministfuture.org/>

For teachers:

<https://www.womenshistorymonth.gov/ForTeachers.html>

<https://www.cliohistory.org/click/classroom/lesson-plans>

Additional March themes & acknowledgements:

March 8: International Women's Day

March 11 to April 9: Ramadan

March 11-15: National Civic Learning Week

March 21: International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

March 25: Holi

March 25: International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

March 31: International Transgender Day of Visibility

February 2024

Black History Month

Origins of Black History Month From [ASALH](#): *Each year the question is asked: Why does Black History Month occur in February? The relevance of February goes back to 1926, when ASALH's founder Dr. Carter G. Woodson first established "Negro History Week" during the second week of February. And why that week? Because it encompasses the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass—both men being great American symbols of freedom. However, Woodson never confined Negro History to a week. His life's work and the mission of ASALH since its founding in 1915 represent a living testimony to the year-round and year-after-year study of African American history.*

Thus, let us think of Black History Month the way our nation honors its greatest moments and greatest people. Let us appreciate Black History Month in a similar way—as when our government sets aside a month or day, thereby giving it a special meaning for all Americans. No one should think that Black History is confined to the month of February, when evidence to the contrary appears everywhere and in every month. Thanks to the pioneering work of Woodson and ASALH, information on the contributions of persons of African descent to our nation and world is currently taught in universities and in many K-12 schools. Black History is featured in television documentaries and in local and national museums. It is conveyed through literature,

the visual arts, and music. The great lives and material culture of Black History can be seen in national park sites and in the preservation of historic homes, buildings, and even cemeteries. Black History Month is not a token. It is a special tribute—a time of acknowledgement, of reflection, and inspiration—that comes to life in real and ongoing activities throughout the year, just as the work of ASALH has for 106 years steadily asserted both racial pride and the centrality of race and the black experience to the American narrative and heritage. **Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, 2021 ASALH National President**

[Black Lives Matter at School: Collective Value](#) - book list by Social Justice Books of Teaching for Change

[America Must Confront the Black History It Teaches](#) - Education Week article by Bettina L. Love

[Black History Month](#) - Browse ready-to-use lesson plans, student activities, collection guides and research aids from the National Gallery of Art, Library of Congress, National Archives, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Park Service, Smithsonian, and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

[Black History Month](#) - From GLSEN: Students thrive when they see themselves reflected in their curriculum. For Black LGBTQ students, this means learning about and honoring history, people, and events related to their intersectional identity as both Black and LGBTQ+.

[Celebrating Black History Education: A Collection](#) - From Education Week: Here are some books, documentaries, websites, and social media accounts to help you teach Black history in all its complexity.

[Celebrate Black History Month 2024](#) - National Museum of African American History and Culture, find resources exploring Art as a Platform for Social Justice, highlighting the "art of resistance" and the artists who used their crafts to uplift the race, speak truth to power and inspire a nation.

[Black History Month Festival](#) - Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), ASALH will hold innovative virtual programming in the month of February celebrating the 2024 Black History theme: African Americans and the Arts

[Black History Month Lessons & Resources](#) - K-12 Lesson plans, activities and more from NEA

[Vermont African American Heritage Trail](#) - Over the centuries, Black Vermonters have had a profound impact on agriculture, owned businesses, held public office, fought alongside fellow citizens in major wars, and worked to make Vermont and the nation a better place. Now visitors and Vermonters alike can learn about Black history and heritage in Vermont.

[Black Excellence, Creativity and History in Vermont](#) - Vermont Public, highlighting the work and contributions of Black Vermonters and conversations on the term Black excellence, Black creativity, and the importance of studying Black history

[The Black Experience in Vermont](#) - Vermont Public, what Black Vermonters have to say about living in the Green Mountain State.

Chinese/Lunar New Year 2024 - February 10th

From Vermont Chinese School:

Lunar New Year, also known as Chinese New Year or Spring Festival, celebrates the beginning of a new year on the traditional Chinese lunar calendar. In 2024, the first day of the Lunar New Year will be on Saturday, February 10, which is the Year of the Dragon.
Follow this [link](#) to learn more!

January 2024

Monthly Themes:

- Poverty in America Awareness - [US Census Bureau](#), [Vermont Community Action Partnership](#)
- Slavery & Human Trafficking Prevention - [Hope for Justice](#), [US Department of State](#), [History of Slavery in Vermont](#), [VT Digger](#)
- National Mentoring - [MENTOR](#), [The White House](#)

Selected Dates & Classroom Resources:

January 15: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

- [PBS Classroom Resources](#)
- [NEA - Learning & Living the Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)
- [Learning for Justice](#)
- [We Are Teachers](#)

January 15-19: No Name Calling Week

- GLSEN - [Speaking Up About Name Calling](#), [Building a Bully-Free Building](#) & [Creating an Anti-Slur Policy](#)

January 27: International Holocaust Remembrance Day

- [PBS Lesson Plans & Activities](#)
- [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)

Resources:

[2023-24 WSESU Acknowledgements](#)

[ADL Calendar of Observances 2024](#)

[Power to Fly Diversity & Inclusion Calendar 2024](#)

[worktango \[Updated for 2024\] Diversity, Equity & Inclusion \(DEI\) Calendar](#)

December 2023

Gedakina One Shelf Book Project Recipient

We want to thank Gedakina for their generous contribution of books to our WSESU library! What a gift to support our acknowledgement of Native American Heritage Month.

“*The One Shelf Book Project* is a giveaway hosted by [Gedakina](#), an honoring and celebration of Native American wisdom by giving away culturally relevant, historically accurate, and high-quality traditional Native American literature and educational material free to school

districts and libraries serving American Indian children. The shelf includes 50+ books for K-12 as well as Teacher Resources, poetry, coloring book, and more.”

Author Joseph Bruchac visit to Hartland

Thank you to Tina Skehan for arranging Joseph Bruchac's visit to Hartland in honor of Native American Heritage Month. 6-8th grade students from Weathersfield had the opportunity to join Hartland students to listen to the storytelling of author Dr. Joseph Bruchac.

[From Joseph's website](#): “Joe is a prolific poet and author, who has had over 180 books published. A citizen of the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation (Band #1101), Joe's Native ancestry has inspired him to study deeply and write about important parts of the Indigenous traditions, peoples, and experiences of the Americas.”

December Acknowledgements

In the spirit of inclusion, and the recognition that December is a month full of [celebrations](#), we invite you to consider the diversity of ways we can acknowledge the people, cultures, and traditions that this month holds (from [Power to Fly Diversity and Inclusion Calendar 2023](#)):

- **December 1:** World AIDS Day commemorates those who have died of AIDS and acknowledges the need for continued commitment to all those affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.
- **December 3:** International Day of Persons with Disabilities was designed to raise awareness in regard to persons with disabilities in order to improve their lives and provide them with equal opportunity.
- **December 8:** Immaculate Conception of Mary, or the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, celebrates the solemn celebration by various Christian denominations who believe in the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
- **December 8:** Bodhi Day, the Buddhist holiday that commemorates the day that Siddhartha Gautama experienced enlightenment.
- **December 10:** International Human Rights Day was established by the United Nations in 1948 to commemorate the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- **December 12:** Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is a religious holiday in Mexico commemorating the appearance of the Virgin Mary near Mexico City in 1531.
- **December 16 to December 24:** Las Posadas is a nine-day celebration in Mexico commemorating the trials Mary and Joseph endured during their journey to Bethlehem.
- **December 18 to December 26:** Hanukkah is a Jewish holiday that is celebrated for eight days and nights. Hanukkah celebrates the victory of the Maccabees, or Israelites, over the Greek-Syrian ruler, Antiochus, approximately 2,200 years ago.
- **December 21:** Yule Winter Solstice is celebrated by Pagans and Wiccans. The first day of winter (and the shortest day of the year) represents a celebration focusing on rebirth, renewal, and new beginnings as the sun makes its way back to the Earth. A solstice is an astronomical event that happens twice each year when the sun reaches its highest position in the sky.
- **December 25:** Christmas Day is the day that many Christians associate with Jesus' birth.

- **December 26:** Boxing Day is a secular holiday celebrated in the United Kingdom, Canada, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, and South Africa.
- **December 26 to January 1:** Kwanzaa is a seven-day celebration of African-American culture and life originally founded in 1966.
- **December 27:** St. John's Apostle and Evangelist Day is the feast day for St. John celebrated by Christian denominations.
- **December 28:** Feast of the Holy Innocents is a Christian feast in remembrance of the massacre of young children in Bethlehem by King Herod the Great in his attempt to kill the infant Jesus.
- **December 31:** Watch Night is a day for Christians to review the year that has passed, make confessions, and then prepare for the year ahead by praying and resolving.

Thanks to the *Anti-Defamation League*, *Diversity Best Practices*, and other inclusivity-focused resources for background research!

November 2023

Please join WSESU in acknowledging November as Native American Heritage Month.

From [First Nations Development Institute](#):

In 1990, President George Bush declared the month of November as Native American Indian Heritage Month, which later became Native American Heritage Month. The month is designed to provide a platform for Native people to share their culture and traditions and for non-native people to learn about Native American history and rights in order to improve awareness. The month builds on the initial proclamation of American Indian Week, and while a month is longer than a week, we have to ask: Why just November? At First Nations, we believe any time of the year is the appropriate time to celebrate the contributions of American Indians.

What most people in this country know — or think they know — about Native Americans is rooted in myths, stereotypes and half-truths. Information they have received since birth from movies, television, the media and school lessons has created a false narrative (or commonly accepted story) about historic and contemporary Native Americans and tribes. From a young age, most people in the United States have been immersed in the current dominant narrative about Native peoples. It is a largely false and deficit-based narrative, meaning it focuses on challenges and weaknesses — real, assumed or exaggerated — rather than being based on strengths and opportunities. These narratives are almost always created by non-Native people, often with the intention to oppress Native nations, peoples and cultures.

Follow these links to learn more:

<https://www.firstnations.org/news/4-reasons-to-rethink-your-november/>
<https://www.nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov/index.html>
<https://www.si.edu/events/native-american-heritage-month>

Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs <https://vcnaa.vermont.gov/>
NPS Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller Land Acknowledgement
<https://www.nps.gov/mabi/learn/historyculture/abenaki.htm>

Featuring *GEDAKINA - <https://www.gedakina.org/>

Providing resources and opportunities for Native American youth, women and their families across New England.

Gedakina focuses on the challenges and hardships that Native American youth, women, and communities face daily and are rooted in multi-generational exposure to systemic poverty, oppression and violence.

Gedakina's activities focus on leadership development, early reader literacy, community health and wellness, traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), sustainability practices, traditional food systems, healthy relationships, and cultural revitalization. Educational Initiatives focus on culturally appropriate and historically accurate literature for teachers, parents, and students alike to prevent bullying and build good self-esteem. Participating youth acquire skills that will enable them to overcome challenges they will face throughout their lifetimes. More practically, usable knowledge will lead to greater economic development opportunities, employment, and continuing education.

Learn more at <https://www.gedakina.org/>

October 2023

Hello WSESU teachers, staff, leaders, family and friends~

For the month of October, we want to acknowledge Indigenous Peoples' Day! Governor issued proclamations designated the second Monday in October as Indigenous Peoples' Day for three years before it was signed into law in 2019. Following trends in cities across the country and leadership from the Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs and Abenaki tribal members including Rich Holschuh, Vermont was the third state in the US, after New Mexico and Maine, to officially replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Why? The National Museum of the American Indian explains (excerpted below),

"Many students learn the phrase, "In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue". But Columbus was not the first foreign explorer to land in the Americas. Neither he nor those that came before him discovered America—because Indigenous Peoples have populated the Western Hemisphere for tens of thousands of years. **European contact resulted in devastating loss of life, disruption of tradition, and enormous loss of lands for Indigenous Peoples in the Americas.** It is estimated that in the 130 years following first contact, Native America lost 95 percent of its population.

Celebrating Columbus and other explorers like him dismisses the devastating losses experienced by Indigenous Peoples of the Western Hemisphere in the past and the ongoing effects of colonialism today.

Indigenous Peoples are still here. Contemporary Native Americans have led numerous movements to advocate for their own rights. **Native people continue to fight to maintain the integrity and viability of Indigenous societies. American Indian history is one of cultural persistence, creative adaptation, renewal, and resilience.**"

Curious to learn more about Indigenous People and classroom resources?

- Rethinking Columbus - <https://rethinkingschools.org/books/rethinking-columbus-expanded-second-edition/> (*email traci.price@wsesu.net to borrow a copy)
- Explore Native Land - <https://native-land.ca/>
- Making Land Acknowledgements Meaningful - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbqGqQw6RF4>
- #HonorNativeLand - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETOhNzBsiKA>
- Abenaki Arts & Education Center - <https://abenaki-edu.org/>
- Vermont Abenaki - <https://downstreet.org/abenaki>
- Abenaki in Vermont Kit Teachers Guide - <https://vermonthistory.org/abenaki-kit-tg>
- Wabanaki Collection - <https://www.wabanakicollection.com/>

Vermont events celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Day:

Saturday, October 7th, 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.: Indigenous People's Day celebration, Stowe.

<https://www.stowevibrancy.org/events/indigenous-peoples-day-rocks/>

Monday, October 9th (Indigenous Peoples Day): 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.: UVM Panel discussion about stolen/missing indigenous artifacts

<https://legacy.drupal2.uvm.edu/diversity/indigenous-peoples-dayprogramming>

Sources and additional resources:

<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/informational/columbus-day-myths>

<https://www.npr.org/2021/10/11/1044823626/indigenous-peoples-day-native-americans-columbus>

***BONUS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** Celebrating Halloween? [Check out a few suggestions](#) of what NOT to wear!

September 2023

Hello WSESU~

We are excited to announce that beginning this month, we will be highlighting timely themes, acknowledgements, and celebrations as an opportunity to learn about and explore people, places, and culture. We may not be able to uplift every theme every month but will dedicate focus on sharing resources that we hope enrich your conversations, classrooms and community.

If you are interested in contributing to monthly acknowledgements, please email traci.price@wsesu.net.

For the month of September, we are excited to highlight **National Hispanic Heritage Month!**
From <https://hispanicheritagemonth.gov/about>:

"Each year, Americans observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15, by celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions of Americans whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

The observation started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period.

The day of September 15 is significant because it is the anniversary of independence for Latin American countries Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16 and September 18, respectively."



Credit: *Chicano Legacy 40 Años*. Mural by Mario Torero and University of California San Diego students.

"Your individuality is important, but so is belonging. Recognize the parts of your culture that have shaped your past, and the parts you want to carry with you into the future." - Sol Peralta

Check out the following links to learn more about the contributions of Hispanic and Latina/o/x people and communities, and for ideas about classroom content:

<https://www.hispanicheritagemonth.gov/for-teachers.html>

<https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/national-hispanic-heritage-month/>

More about Mario Torero: <https://mariotorero.art/about/>

More about Amanda Sol Peralta:

<https://poetsandquants.com/2018/12/08/meet-ucla-andersons-mba-class-of-2020/15/>