



WESTRIDGE SCHOOL

BLACK HISTORY MONTH: HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND JOY

Compiled by Amber Rodriguez and Tamara Jaffe, co-deans of Student Voices

Dear Westridge Community,

In addition to the Lunar New Year, we would also like to recognize and honor Black History Month. February is the time of year to amplify Black voices and realize that Black people and other marginalized communities should be valued year-round. Let's all commit or recommit to educating and informing oneself beyond the month of February.

Since 1976, it is customary for every president to endorse a specific theme for Black History Month. The Black History Month 2022 theme, "Black Health and Wellness," places a lens on "the legacy of not only Black scholars and medical practitioners in Western medicine, but also other ways of knowing (e.g., birthworkers, doulas, midwives, naturopaths, herbalists, etc.) throughout the African Diaspora. The 2022 theme considers activities, rituals and initiatives that Black communities have done to be well."

<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-history-month>

Westridge would like to support Black health and wellness with a spotlight on **Black joy**. "At the core or center of Black culture, Black identity, Black art, Black ideology, and Black community is joy," said [Anita Dashiell-Sparks](#), a professor of theater practice and Associate Dean of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the USC School of Dramatic Arts. "Black joy is the heartbeat and pulse of our survival, our resiliency, our perseverance, our health and wellbeing."

WESTRIDGE HIGHLIGHTS: BLACK JOY

Since 1976, February is recognized in the United States as Black History Month to recognize and celebrate the Black diaspora. With the recent civil unrest, ignited by countless Black deaths at the hands of police brutality and racial discrimination, there is a sense of loss and a need for joy. Black people have suffered but as 22-year-old inaugural poet Amanda Gorman reminded us, "even as we grieved, we grew; that even as we hurt, we hoped." The idea that Black people can be happy, in spite of

their trauma and history of oppression, is Black joy. As we embark on a new year, "joy" is a word we would like to give more energy to. That means reading and sharing stories that uplift, inspire and make us feel proud of being Black.

Cal State Fullerton African American studies professor Mei-Ling Malone explains: "Like other communities, Black folks, of course, feel tremendous pain, outrage, sorrow and depression, and we struggle with our mental health. But there is also a necessary longing and practice of joy. Black joy is about affirming one's beautiful life. Black joy rejects the pathology of racism. Black joy is being fully human. Black joy is pride. Black joy is self-love. Black joy is shining bright. Black joy is living your best life despite living in a racist world setup against your very being."

We encourage you to listen to [this beautiful poem](#) by Ms. Selah Johnson, an 8th grade student at Westside Neighborhood School in Los Angeles. This video is courtesy of [Private School Village](#).

BLACK JOY RESOURCES



VIDEOS

[Joyful Movement](#)

[Black Joy Message](#)

[The Power of Black Joy on Screen](#) *MS/US

ARTICLES

[How Black Joy Grew](#)

["Black Love" New Book](#)

[Black Joy Stories from 10 Young People](#) *MS/US

[What Black Joy Means – And Why It's
More Important Than Ever](#)

[Don't Teach Black History Without Joy.](#)

[Black Joy Through Black Business](#)

BOOKS

[A list for all ages](#)

MUSIC

[Songs that Radiate
Black Joy.](#)

[The Black Joy
Experience](#)

TIK TOKS

[Black Joy.](#)

[Black Joy is
Revolutionary.](#)

[Teaching Black
History.](#)

ART

[Museum of Black Joy.](#)