



WELCOME

The Govs Family DEI Committee (GFDEIC) is a group of parents and guardians who are committed to supporting a school community that, at its core, draws strength from its diversity, equity, and inclusion, while providing families with an opportunity to deepen their engagement through healthy dialogue, learning, and connections.

The Committee works to support the school's Office of Multicultural Education, coordinating with Dean Eddie Carson to host parents and guardians for original events and programming. Our events often focus on topics that are aligned with events and experiences our students are having on campus. Please reach out to us and let us know your thoughts about DEI at Govs!

2022-2023 Committee members: Tamah French P'24 (Chair), Ritch Winokur P'21,'23 (Vice-chair), Melissa Even P'26, Rebecca Goldberg P'24, Kristen Grubbs P'24,'25, Ahmer Ibrahim P'24, Erika Joyner P'24, Afroz Khan P'24, Kat Moulton P'23,'25, LiXin Olsen P'25, Jennifer Storer P'20,'22 & GFDEIC faculty liaison.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day - January 27

"We cannot change what happened anymore. The only thing we can do is to learn from the past and to realize what discrimination and persecution of innocent people means. I believe that it is everyone's responsibility to fight prejudice."

These are the words Otto Frank, Holocaust survivor and father of Anne Frank, uttered in 1970. He was the sole survivor not only of his own family, but of the eight Jews who hid from the Nazis in the Secret Annex in Amsterdam for 761 days. On January 27, the anniversary of the 1945 liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp, we reflect upon International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

As the number of Holocaust survivors dwindle, it is our duty to continue to tell these stories. Stories of horror about the systematic extermination of more than six million Jews. Stories about the death of millions of others who either tried to help the Jews or were part of other groups targeted by the "Final Solution". Even children were not spared. An estimated one million or more children perished during the Holocaust.

As we contemplate this senseless loss of life and remember those who were lost, we allow them to continue living through their stories--stories of strength, courage, and valor. We build strength to fight contemporary bigotry and persecution. We learn to be upstanders--not bystanders. Instead of asking, "How could this happen?", we ensure this will not happen again.

In the words of Elie Wiesel, Nobel Laureate, Holocaust survivor, and activist, "Indifference, to me, is the epitome of evil." - by Ahmer Ibrahim P'24, GFDEIC member

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

In this section we offer conversation starters for families. The purpose of the conversation is mutual understanding, without judgment. It is an opportunity to actively listen with an open mind and heart. Have a conversation grounded in curiosity, without trying to convince the other person of your point of view.

On Friday, January 13, in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. UMASS, Amherst Professor Whitney Battle-Baptiste, Ph.D., spoke to faculty, students, and administration about the legacy of MLK. Create the opportunity for dialogue by asking your student about Professor Battle-Baptiste's presentation:

- What resonated with you from Professor Battle-Baptiste's speech?
- Professor Battle-Baptiste asked about the young leaders in today's world. Who are some "young leaders" who you admire?
- Is there anything she said that changed your point of view?
- What did she mean when she talked about the importance of not being color-blind?
- If you could have lunch with her, what would you like to hear more about? What questions would you ask?

GOVS FAMILY DEI BOOK CLUB:

The 2022-2023 Book Club continues with a discussion of *Grading for Equity* by Joe Feldman on Thursday, February 23, 7:00 p.m. on Zoom.

Retakes, Rewrites, Formative vs. Summative Assessments...

Curious about what these words mean? Interested in learning more? The GFDEIC will host a discussion about *Grading for Equity* by Joe Feldman on Zoom on February 23 at 7:00 p.m.

Read by all the Govs faculty last summer, the book raises thought-provoking questions about how traditional grading practices can perpetuate inequity and discriminate against certain groups of students. Numerous teachers are trial implementing at least one idea in the book this year.

Led by Chemistry Teacher Jennifer Storer P'20, '22, the group will discuss Feldman's ideas in depth, consider how grading policies affected us when we were in school, and explore how these new practices are being received by our students and families.

We hope you will join this important and timely discussion! It's encouraged but not required to read *Grading for Equity* before the book discussion. The book can be purchased at www.gradingforequity.org or borrowed from a teacher. Register for the Zoom link [here!](#)



DO YOU HAVE YOUR GOVS DEI PIN?

Come visit the GFDEIC during Winter Family Weekend!

Friday, February 17, 9:45 a.m.-1:00 p.m. in the Cobb Room, Phillips

HAPPY LUNAR NEW YEAR 春节

The Lunar New Year, also called Chinese New Year or Spring Festival, is the beginning of a new year based on the lunisolar calendar of China. It marks the end of winter and the beginning of the spring season. The New Year celebration lasts from the eve of the New Year, when Chinese families traditionally celebrate with the biggest family reunion dinner of a year, to the Lantern Festival, the 15th day of the New Year. The first seven days of the New Year are generally national holidays.

The Lunar New Year is officially celebrated in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Vietnam, Singapore, and other places with large Chinese populations. It is estimated that more than 25 percent of the world population is celebrating Lunar New Year/Spring Festival and the holiday stands as the most important celebration of the year for many Asian cultures. This year, the Lunar New Year is celebrated on January 22.

- LiXin Olsen P'25, GFDEIC Member

DO YOU KNOW?

February is Black History Month... and February 1 is **FREEDOM DAY?**



In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing enslaved people. But Lincoln knew that a proclamation wouldn't be enough. The 13th Amendment, which formally abolished slavery, was officially approved on February 1, 1865.

When the proclamation was made, Richard R. Wright was just nine years old and enslaved, according to the National Constitution Center. Wright went on to serve as the first president of Savannah State University, becoming a civil rights advocate and an author. In 1942, Wright, at the age of 86, began lobbying for the creation of National Freedom Day. He held grassroots celebrations honoring February 1st and went on a national speaking tour with legislators to get the day recognized. But Wright never saw his dream realized. He died in 1947, a year before the day was signed into federal code. On January 25, 1949, President Harry Truman signed a bill establishing National Freedom Day on February 1.

The GFDEIC members asked members of the Govs community to reflect on the question: **What is the meaning of freedom?** What does freedom look like to you? How far do you think we've come since Freedom Day was established in 1949? What work do we need to do as a society? What can you do as an individual?

Read community responses on the next page.



What is the Meaning of Freedom?

Freedom is not having to worry if the future will be better for your kids. - *Ray Long '96, Associate Director of Admission & Director of Financial Aid*

Freedom is the ability to believe in whoever you choose, to love the way that fills you up and to excel and achieve in whatever endeavors you decide; for anyone pursuing their truth, to be able to do all these things without fearing for their safety and well being. - *Danielle Kingsbury- P'20, '24, Director of Affective Education, 10th Grade Dean*

Freedom allows a person to responsibly choose an action or association or relationship based on what she feels and thinks is right without being blocked or hindered by someone else...that is freedom to. Freedom from/of was stated by FDR as "- the freedom of speech, the freedom of worship, the freedom from want, and the freedom from fear." - *Paul Wann- P'94, English & Theater Teacher, Arts Dept. Chair*

The most beautiful freedom I can imagine is to live without fear. - *Maud Hamovit- P'09, '13, Faculty Emerita*

Freedom is the ability to love who you want to without being judged. - *Dr. Laurie Quimby- P'14*

Freedom to me is the idea that your birth doesn't define your destiny, but what shapes your life is the ability to make choices that allow you to be and become the person you want to be. This idea of freedom is predicated on the idea that the choices people make will not harm other people or infringe upon other people's ability to make choices freely. This idea of freedom is also wrapped in the imperative that resources need to be distributed equitably, so everyone has the chance and choices to fulfill their dreams. - *Perry Nelson- P'24, '25, History Teacher*

For me freedom is the ability to be my unique self without judgment and to have my distinct voice accepted and represented within my environment. - *Michelle de la Guardia, Spanish Teacher, Language Department Chair*

Freedom for me is the ability to live a life that is self-determined to pursue education, employment, and personal health decisions without being limited by religious, societal, or institutional barriers. - *Jennifer Storer- P'20, '22, Science Teacher, GFDEIC member*

Freedom is not the absence of all constraints, some of which are integral to civil society, but the inalienable right of every person to have a fair chance to realize their self-determined identity and dreams. - *Bill Quigley- P'04, '10, History Teacher, Writing Center Director*

Freedom is to be your truest self. - *Eva Bockoff '24*

Not for the Content of their Character but for the Color of their Skin

by Eddie Carson, Dean of Multicultural Education

Here in the dawn of the twenty-first century, in the month we remember Martin Luther King Jr., we must pause and ask why King is largely remembered for having a dream. And while his "I Have a Dream Speech" stands at the pinnacle of what Americans know about him, King's objectives have yet to be heard. His radical capacity was shaped by measures other than "not the color of your skin, but the content of your character."

The poet Langston Hughes lamented the four young black girls who went to Sunday School and never returned home because America was not ready to accept the radical King. Radical Love. Justice. Those black girls left their blood on the wall of their church.

Three weeks before the bombing at the 16th Street Baptist Church that killed the four little black girls in 1963, King pronounced in his epic speech at his famous March on Washington D.C., that he had a dream of a day when little black boys and black girls would be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. However, weeks later, King attended the funerals of these four little black girls; he had to explain why these little girls would never hold hands with anyone again. He had to explain why they were martyrs not for their character's content but for their skin color. King told thousands that these unoffending, beautiful, innocent girls were victims of vicious and tragic crimes.

As we celebrate King, we should celebrate the radical King who spoke about how ignoring race only exacerbates it. He sought a revolution that challenged American capitalism. Because of that, just over half of black folk did not care for his vision of challenging the economic inequalities promulgated by capitalism, while 72% of white folk disapproved. Folks are not close to achieving his real "I Have a Dream." Many want to avoid hearing about his real dream; it is far too radical. I like the radical King, but hate the King I was taught to love most of my life, the sanitized and deodorized King.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Tuesday evenings through 2/27 - "50 Years of Women at Govs", sign up [here](#)
- 1/27 - International Holocaust Remembrance Day
- 2/1 - Freedom Day
- 2/21 - Speaker: *The Disability Gift: Resilience, Belonging, and Being Human* (watch Govs Call for details)
- 2/23 - GFDEIC Book Club - *Grading for Equity* - See page 2 for more info