

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

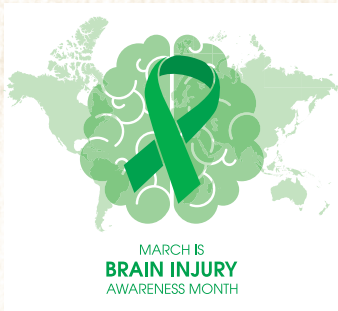
Advancing Equitable Opportunities



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March 2026 Cultural Heritage Highlights

Disclaimer: The Cultural Heritage Highlights is intended as a resource to encourage the recognition, exploration, and celebration of a wide range of cultural observances in schools and communities. Each monthly edition features selected observances that reflect both longstanding and emerging cultural traditions. While every effort is made to include diverse and meaningful content, the list is not exhaustive and should not be viewed as an intentional exclusion of any celebration. Educators and community members are encouraged to use this resource as a starting point for deeper learning, inclusive dialogue, and the continued honoring of all cultural identities throughout the year. Suggestions for upcoming highlights are welcomed and can be sent to ESBOCESdei@esboces.org.

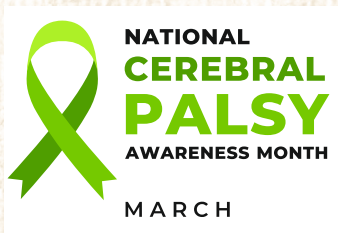


Brain Injury Awareness Month

Brain Injury Awareness Month traces its roots back to the efforts of advocacy organizations and individuals committed to raising awareness about brain injuries. Over time, this initiative gained recognition internationally, with countries around the world joining in to raise awareness about the impact of brain injuries and the importance of prevention, treatment, support, and advocacy.

Learn more:

[Brain Injury Association](#)



Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month

In addition to Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month, **National Cerebral Palsy Awareness Day** is observed annually on March 25 to celebrate the strength and potential of the millions of individuals living with Cerebral Palsy (CP). CP is not a disease, but rather the most common motor disability in children, encompassing a group of permanent movement disorders that affect body movement and muscle coordination. We can promote inclusion and empowerment by providing opportunities to lead a vibrant and fulfilling life, regardless of their physical abilities.

Learn more:

[About Cerebral Palsy](#)



Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

Every March, we celebrate Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, a vibrant time dedicated to highlighting the unique talents and contributions of the 61 million Americans living with diverse physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities. By fostering understanding and breaking down barriers to education, employment, and community life, we work together to build a world where everyone has the opportunity to shine and thrive exactly as they are.

Learn more:

[Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month](#)



Greek-American Heritage Month

This month, also known as **Hellenic Heritage Month**, honors the profound influence of Greek culture and history on the United States. This month-long tribute coincides with **Greek Independence Day** on March 25, a day that commemorates the start of the Greek War of Independence in 1821. Since the late 19th century, millions of Greek immigrants have brought with them the timeless values of Hellenism—such as humanism, civic responsibility, and a passion for the arts and sciences—which continue to enrich our communities today. With over 2.5 million Americans of Greek descent, this month is a joyful opportunity to recognize the enduring contributions of the Greek language, heritage, and spirit to our collective national identity.

Learn more:

[Greek-American Heritage Month](#)



Irish-American Heritage Month

Originally recognized by Congress in 1991, this month honors the 30 million Americans of Irish descent who have contributed to our society, from arts and sciences to industry and government, and so on. The celebration is held in March to coincide with **Saint Patrick's Day** on March 17, a day that evolved from a religious feast into a vibrant global celebration of Irish culture and resilience. From the Irish-born signatories of the Declaration of Independence to the 22 U.S. Presidents with Irish roots, this month recognizes the "can-do" spirit and enduring legacy of a community that continues to enrich our national identity.

Learn more:

[Irish-American Heritage Month](#)

[Architect of the Capitol](#)



Women's History Month

Women's History Month is a vibrant tribute to the revolutionary women whose courage and vision have shaped our world. What began as a local "**Women's History Week**" in Santa Rosa, California in 1978 grew into a national movement, leading President Jimmy Carter to issue the first Presidential Proclamation in 1980. This celebration is anchored by **International Women's Day** on March 8, a global day of recognition that traces its roots back to labor protests in 1908, where 15,000 women marched through New York City to demand better pay and voting rights. Today, we honor a legacy that spans from the 19th Amendment and Title IX to the barrier-breaking achievements of leaders like Maria Skłodowska-Curie, Rosa Parks, and Kamala Harris. It is a wonderful time to celebrate the unsung stories of all women, across every culture and community, and to continue working toward a world of true equality for everyone.

Learn more:

[Women's History Month](#)

[Get Ready for IWD 2026](#)



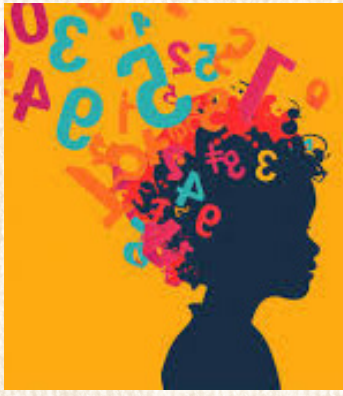
March 1 – Zero Discrimination Day

Zero Discrimination Day is a powerful global movement dedicated to the right of every person to live a full and productive life with dignity and respect. Launched in 2014 by Michel Sidibé, then-Executive Director of UNAIDS, this day originally focused on dismantling the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS, but has since expanded to champion equality for all, regardless of gender, race, disability, or orientation. It is a reminder that by embracing our diversity, we can build a more just and inclusive global society for everyone.

Learn more:

[UNAIDS: Zero Discrimination Day](#)

[Zero Discrimination Day Resources](#)



March 3 – International Dyscalculia Awareness Day

On this day, the purpose is to shine a light on a frequently misunderstood learning disability that affects how people process numbers. Often described as “math dyslexia,” dyscalculia is a neurological condition that impacts number sense, making tasks like telling time, counting change, or memorizing multiplication tables uniquely challenging. It is estimated to affect 5-7% of the population, yet it remains far less recognized than other learning disabilities. By dedicating a day to its awareness, we celebrate the diverse ways our brains work and advocate for early diagnosis and specialized support that allows every individual to navigate the world with confidence and success.

Learn more:

[LDA](#)

[Happy Mind Training](#)

[Child Mind Institute](#)



March 3 – Purim

Purim begins on the evening of Monday, March 2, and continues through Tuesday, March 3. It is a vibrant Jewish holiday that commemorates the historical survival of the Jewish people in the ancient Persian Empire. Today, it is celebrated with a focus on community and joy, featuring Megillah (Book of Esther) readings, the exchange of food gifts with friends, and contributions to charitable causes. In addition to these traditions, the holiday is marked by festive meals and a spirited atmosphere often including costumes and public celebrations.

Learn more:

[Purim 2026](#)



March 4 – Holi

Holi is a vibrant Hindu spring festival that has evolved from an ancient 4th-century tradition into a global “Festival of Colors.” This joyful observance centers on the triumph of good over evil, rooted in the legend of young Prahalad whose unwavering faith protected him from fire. It also commemorates the divine love between Radha and Krishna, which inspired the signature tradition of playfully tossing brightly colored powders (gulal) and water to blur social boundaries. Beyond the festivities, Holi is a powerful time for renewal and reconciliation, during which individuals are encouraged to forgive past grievances, mend broken relationships, and embrace the future with a fresh, positive perspective.

Learn more:

[Holi Hai!](#)

[Holi: Festival of Colors](#)



March 8 – Daylight Saving Time (DST) Begins

Each March, we “spring forward” into Daylight Saving Time (DST), a tradition where we move our clocks ahead one hour to make the most of the long, sunny days ahead. While we do lose an hour of sleep on that Saturday night, the reward is an extra hour of beautiful evening light for outdoor fun, backyard barbecues, and sunset walks. In the United States, this change always kicks off at 2:00 a.m. on the second Sunday of March, signaling that spring is just around the corner!

Learn more:

[Why Does Daylight Saving Time Exist?](#)



March 17 – Saint Patrick's Day

Interestingly, the holiday's famous parades and secular celebrations actually have their roots right here in America, where Irish immigrants transformed a traditional religious feast day into a joyful festival of culture and civic pride. During the brutal winter of 1780, General George Washington famously granted his weary troops at Morristown their only holiday of the season on March 17, an event now known as the **Saint Patrick's Day Encampment**, to honor the bravery of the many Irish soldiers in the Continental Army. Today, from dyeing the Chicago River green to sharing a meal of corned beef and cabbage, this day is a beloved national tradition that invites everyone to be "Irish for a day" and celebrate the enduring spirit of inclusion and community.

Learn more:

[History of St. Patrick's Day](#)

[George Washington's Mount Vernon](#)



March 19 – Ugadi/Gudi Padwa/Hindu Lunar New Year

Celebrating the dawn of the Hindu Lunar New Year, Ugadi and Gudi Padwa represent a beautiful time of spiritual renewal and regional heritage. Whether hoisting the symbolic "victory flag" (Gudi) in Maharashtra or preparing the traditional six-flavored Pachadi in Southern India, these festivities honor the diverse experiences of life, reminding us to embrace joy and challenge with equal grace. As we welcome the arrival of spring and the anniversary of the universe's creation, this holiday serves as a professional and heartfelt opportunity to celebrate new beginnings, prosperity, and the enduring strength of community. To all those celebrating, we wish you Ugadi Subhakankshalu (Telugu), Ugadi Habba Shubhashayagalu (Kannada), or Gudhi Padvyachya Hardik Shubhechha (Marathi).

Learn more:

[Happy Ugadi!](#)



March 20 – Eid al-Fitr

Eid al-Fitr marks the completion of **Ramadan**, the holy month of fasting. Often called the "Festival of Breaking the Fast," this celebration begins with a special communal prayer (Salat al-Eid) in the morning, followed by a day of gratitude, generosity, and "Sweet Eid" feasts. A central part of the holiday is **Zakat al-Fitr**, a special charitable gift given before the morning prayer to ensure that every member of the community, regardless of their circumstances, can join in the festivities. It is a wonderful time of renewal during which families gather in their finest clothes, children receive gifts called "Eidi," and the universal greeting of "Eid Mubarak" (Blessed Eid) fills the air with a spirit of peace and togetherness.

Learn more:

[Fun Kids Live](#)



March 20 – International Day of Happiness

Every March 20, we celebrate the International Day of Happiness, a global movement that recognizes happiness as a fundamental human right and a universal goal for all people. Established by the United Nations in 2012, this day was inspired by the country of Bhutan, which has famously prioritized Gross National Happiness over economic profit since the 1970s. This year, the date itself holds special significance as it coincides with the March Equinox, a universal phenomenon felt simultaneously across the globe. Far more than just a date on the calendar, this day serves as a call to action for governments and individuals alike to prioritize well-being and compassion as the true measure of social progress.

Learn more:

[International Day of Happiness](#)



March 20 – Spring Equinox

Spring Equinox is a vibrant moment of balance and renewal that officially signals the start of astronomical spring in the Northern Hemisphere. Scientifically, an equinox occurs when the Earth's axis is tilted neither toward nor away from the sun, placing the sun directly above the equator. This unique alignment creates a day of "equal night," where almost every place on Earth experiences roughly 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of darkness. From this point, the days continue to grow longer and warmer, awakening the natural world with blooming flowers, budding trees, and the return of migrating birds.

Learn more:

[March Equinox 2026](#)
[Smithsonian Science Education Center](#)



March 21 – International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

This day honors the memory of the 69 peaceful protesters that were killed in Sharpeville, South Africa, in 1960 while demonstrating against apartheid "pass laws." Established by the United Nations in 1966, this day serves as both a solemn commemoration of that sacrifice and a vital call to action for the global community. By remembering the lives lost in Sharpeville, we honor the courage of those who stand against injustice and reaffirm our commitment to building a future where every individual is treated with dignity, regardless of their race or background. It challenges us to confront systemic racism and redouble our efforts toward building a more equitable and inclusive world for all.

Learn more:

[International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#)

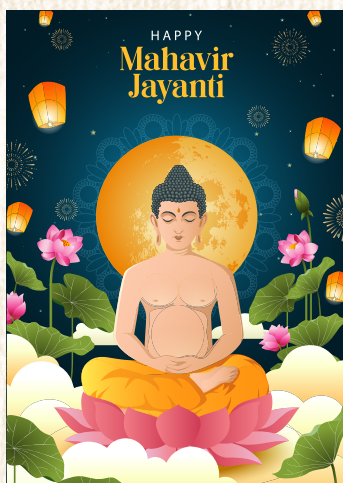


March 21 – World Down Syndrome Day

The significance of the date itself (3/21) was chosen with intention. Down syndrome (or Trisomy 21) occurs when a person has three copies of the 21st chromosome, rather than two. By observing the day on the 21st day of the 3rd month, the global community uses the calendar to mirror the genetic uniqueness that defines the condition. World Down Syndrome Day is a global initiative to promote awareness, inclusion, and advocacy. From the playful "Lots of Socks" campaign, to serious discussions on disability rights, this day celebrates the vital contributions of individuals with Down syndrome to our workplaces, schools, and communities. It serves as a professional and heartfelt reminder to "End the Stereotypes" and ensure that everyone, regardless of their genetic makeup, has the opportunity to live a full and included life.

Learn more:

[About World Down Syndrome Day](#)



March 31 – Mahavir Jayanti

Mahavir Jayanti commemorates the birth anniversary of Lord Mahavir, the 24th Tirthankara and a foundational philosopher of Jainism. Originally a prince named Vardhamana, he renounced his heritage to seek enlightenment, eventually earning the title "Mahavir" for his mastery over the self. His timeless teachings emphasize the five vows of Ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (truth), Asteya (non-stealing), Brahmacharya (chastity), and Aparigraha (non-attachment). Today, the holiday is observed through temple visits, the study of scriptures, and acts of charity, serving as a powerful reminder of the universal values of peace, integrity, and compassion.

Learn more:

[Celebrating Mahavira: Mahavira Jayanti and Divali](#)

