

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

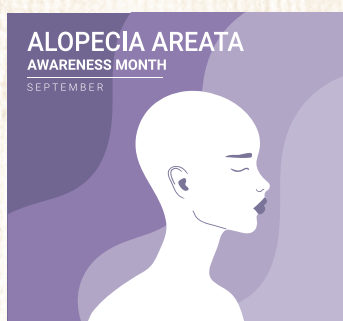
Advancing Equitable Opportunities



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September 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.



Alopecia Awareness Month

Alopecia areata is a widespread autoimmune condition that leads to sudden hair loss on the scalp, face, and/or body. Because it varies in severity, it affects everyone differently. Alopecia does not discriminate, it affects people of every age, gender, and background. Though it frequently begins in childhood, there is no single timeline for how it develops. Understanding it is the first step toward managing it with confidence.

Learn more:

[National Alopecia Areata Foundation](#)

[National Alopecia Areata Foundation YouTube Page](#)



Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

Childhood Cancer Awareness Month honors brave young fighters and shines a light on their journeys. Each year, approximately 400,000 children are diagnosed with cancer worldwide. Due to breakthroughs in medicine, survival rates have soared past 80% to 85% in many parts of the world, and health leaders are actively working to bring that life-saving care to every child, everywhere.

Learn more:

[About Childhood Cancer](#)

[St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Video](#)



Leukemia and Lymphoma Awareness Month

Leukemia and Lymphoma Awareness Month is a time to rally behind individuals and families affected by blood cancers and celebrate the incredible strides being made in research. September 4 marks **World Leukemia Day**, a global initiative focused on raising awareness about the symptoms of leukemia to help with early detection. Driven by groundbreaking advancements in therapies like immunotherapy and targeted treatments, survival rates are steadily rising, and a global community stands united to support patients on their journey to healing.

Learn more:

[American Association for Cancer Research](#)

[Rutgers Cancer Institute Video](#)



National Deaf Awareness Month

September is National Deaf Awareness Month, featuring the **International Week of the Deaf** to celebrate the accomplishments and rights of deaf individuals. Taking place September 21-27, the 2026 theme is “Declaring Deaf People’s Human Rights.” September 23 is the **International Day of Sign Languages**, marking the founding of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD). The WFD advances global accessibility, human rights training, and policy initiatives to combat daily inequality.

Learn more:

[About the World Federation of the Deaf \(WFD\)](#)



National Hispanic Heritage Month

From September 15 to October 15, National Hispanic Heritage Month recognizes the contributions and influence of Hispanic Americans to the history, culture, and achievements of the United States. During Hispanic Heritage Month, many cities will host concerts, parades, runs, festivals, and art exhibits in celebration. You can also celebrate by watching award shows that honor the many accomplishments of Latinas and Latinos.

Learn more:

[National Hispanic Heritage Month](#)

[Britannica Education Video](#)



National Sickle Cell Awareness Month

National Sickle Cell Awareness Month is a time to foster understanding and celebrate the resilience of those living with sickle cell disease. Medical breakthroughs including innovative gene therapies, newer medications, and advanced care strategies, are rapidly transforming treatment and paving the way toward a cure. By spreading awareness, we help ensure every individual receives the expert care they deserve.

Learn more:

[National Sickle Cell Awareness Month](#)

[Cure 4 The Kids Foundation Video](#)



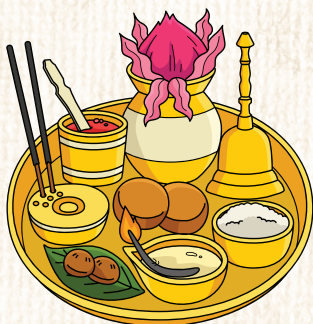
National Suicide Prevention Month

National Suicide Prevention Month is a time for honest conversations, breaking stigmas, and supporting the mental well-being of our communities. Tragically, suicide has become a leading cause of death among children and young people, making early awareness and open communication more important than ever. Children need to know they are never alone and that asking for help is a sign of immense strength. **National Suicide Prevention Week** takes place September 6–12, with **World Suicide Prevention Day** on September 10. By learning the warning signs, listening without judgment, and spreading hope, we can all play a life-saving role in helping the people in our lives.

Learn more:

[American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#)

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#)



Pitru Paksha (September 26-October 10)

Pitru Paksha (PIT-ru puk-shuh) is a Hindu 16 lunar day period dedicated to paying homage to their ancestors who have left their physical bodies by offering respect and honoring their lives. This period is also referred to as Shraddha (shr-A-dh). Shraddha translates to “food offering” and is one of the integral parts of the period. It is discouraged to carry out any events such as housewarmings, engagements, and marriages during Pitru Paksha. Instead, Hindus use this time to remember and reflect.

Learn more:

[Pitru Paksha](#)



Bisexual Awareness Week (September 16-23)

Co-founded by GLAAD and BiNet USA, this week focuses on educating the public, breaking down stereotypes, and addressing the unique health and social challenges the community faces. The week ends on September 23 with **Bi Visibility Day**, a powerful global event that unites bisexual individuals, friends, and allies. This day aims to counteract prejudice, address bi-erasure, and foster bridges of understanding within the straight community and the LGBTQ+ community. By raising awareness, it reminds everyone that love, identity, and visibility deserve to be celebrated openly.

Learn more:

[#BiWeek: Celebrate Bisexuality+ Origins and Significance of Bi Visibility Day](#)



Constitution Week (September 17-23)

On September 17, 1787, the delegates to the Constitutional Convention signed the United States Constitution. Ratified in 1788 and in operation since 1789, the United States Constitution is the world's longest standing national constitution. Every year from September 17-23, we celebrate Constitution Week, starting off with **Constitution Day** on September 17. During this time, people join together to commemorate this important event and its impact on our nation's history through local events, parades, and demonstrations.

Learn more:

[Constitution Day](#)



Sukkot (September 26-October 2)

Beginning at sundown on September 25, Sukkot is a week-long Jewish harvest festival that celebrates community, gratitude, and hospitality. Also known as the "Feast of Tabernacles," this time is traditionally marked by building and spending time in a sukkah, a temporary, outdoor hut. The sukkah represents the fragile dwellings used by ancestors during their travels, serving as a reminder of nature's bounty. Family, friends, and neighbors are welcomed inside to share meals, exchange stories, and celebrate the blessings of the season together.

Learn more:

[What Is Sukkot?](#)
[The LEGO Sukkot Movie: Jewish Holidays 101 Video](#)



September 7 – Labor Day

Labor Day celebrates the people who campaigned tirelessly for workers' rights during the late 19th century labor movement. Their hard-fought wins are the reason for many of the rights we enjoy and take for granted today, such as a 40-hour work week, safe work conditions, paid time off, and sick leave. Those workers saw that there could be no freedom and liberty in this country without economic freedom for the working class. The holiday honors the source of this nation's strength—American workers, unions, and labor leaders.

Learn more:

[PBS Video: Labor Day](#)



September 11 – Enkutatash (Ethiopian and Eritrean New Year)

Enkutatash (Ge'ez: inik'ut'at'ashi) is a public holiday coinciding with the New Year in Ethiopia and Eritrea. It occurs on Meskerem 1 on the Ethiopian calendar, which is September 11 (or, during a leap year, September 12) according to the Gregorian calendar. On this day, Ethiopians wear vibrant new clothes and gather with loved ones. The day begins with a colorful procession, where people young and old take to the streets singing, dancing, and distributing flowers.

Learn more:

[Ethiopian New Year](#)



September 11 – Patriot Day

Patriot Day is dedicated to honoring and remembering the 2,977 lives lost in the tragic terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. This day serves as a time of reflection, unity, and gratitude for the immense bravery of first responders and everyday citizens who risked their lives to save others. The U.S. flag is flown at half-staff at all federal buildings and homes across the nation, and a countrywide moment of silence is observed at 8:46 AM EDT, marking the exact moment the first plane struck the North Tower of the World Trade Center. It stands as a reminder of resilience, community, and a promise to never forget.

Learn more:

[Patriot Day in the USA 2026](#)



September 12-13 – Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah, which means the “head of the year,” is the Jewish New Year. The central theme not only of Rosh Hashanah, but of the entire fall season, is teshuvah, a word commonly translated as “repentance,” but more literally means “return.” Rosh Hashanah—and the holiday that follows it, Yom Kippur—are focused on teshuvah. Many Jewish people see this as a time to make amends or apologize to those they have wronged in the past year and resolve to do better in the year about to begin.

Learn more:

[PBS Video: Rosh Hashanah](#)



September 16 – El Grito de Dolores/Cry of Dolores

Mexican Independence Day (Día de la Independencia) honors the historic launch of Mexico’s war for independence from Spain in 1810. The festivities begin the night before, when the President of Mexico and local leaders worldwide reenact the famous Grito de Dolores (Cry of Dolores), Father Miguel Hidalgo’s rallying cry that sparked the revolution. On September 16, the celebration reaches its peak, featuring massive colorful parades, live mariachi music, traditional folk dancing, and fireworks. Communities come together to enjoy festive dishes such as chiles en nogada, which mirror the colors of the Mexican flag, and pozole, creating an atmosphere that welcomes everyone to join in the cry of “¡Viva México!”

Learn more:

[Britannica](#)

[El Debate News Video](#)



September 20 – HeForShe Movement

On this day, we commemorate the start of the HeForShe movement back in 2014. This solidarity movement was created by the United Nations in an effort to combat gender inequality. HeForShe welcomes people of all genders to join in solidarity with women to foster a strong and visible united force in support of gender equality. The men of the HeForShe movement are not cast to the sidelines, but instead, they are working alongside women and each other to better their communities.

Learn more:

[HeForShe](#)



September 21 – International Day of Peace

In 1981, the International Day of Peace was established by a unanimous United Nations resolution. In 2001, the UN General Assembly voted formally to designate the day as a period of non-violence and a 24-hour global ceasefire. Each year, the UN Headquarters in New York rings the Peace Bell, cast from coins donated by children from all continents, followed by a worldwide minute of silence at 12:00 PM local time. It serves as a powerful reminder to practice empathy, resolve conflicts mindfully, and foster harmony worldwide.

Learn more:

[What is the International Day of Peace?](#)



September 21 – Yom Kippur

In 2026, Yom Kippur begins at sundown on September 20 and ends at sundown on September 21. In Hebrew, Yom Kippur means “Day of Atonement,” and is known as the holiest day of the Jewish year. Leading up to and on that day, Jewish people traditionally ask for forgiveness for their wrongdoings from God and from fellow human beings.

Learn more:

[Yom Kippur](#)

[Behind the News Video](#)



September 22 – American Business Women's Day

Every year on September 22, we celebrate American Business Women's Day. It is a special day dedicated to celebrating the achievements and contributions of women in the business world. This date marks the founding of the American Business Women's Association in 1949, a key organization that supports women's professional growth and achievements.

Learn more:

[American Business Women's Association](#)

[Proclamation 5532 – American Business Women's Day, 1986](#)



September 22 – Fall/Autumnal Equinox

In the Northern Hemisphere, the Fall/Autumnal Equinox is the transitional period that marks the end of summer and the beginning of autumn. During this time, daylight and darkness find balance, as this equinox is one of two times during the year when the length of day and night are equal. This day is recognized by some for emphasizing balance, gratitude, and reflection.

Learn more:

[How to Celebrate the Fall Equinox](#)

[Hey! Guess What Video](#)



September 26 – National Public Lands Day

Beginning in 1994, National Public Lands Day has been recognized annually on the fourth Saturday of September and has now become the United States' largest one-day volunteer event. It is led by the National Environmental Education Foundation, along with the National Park Service and other federal agencies. Last year, more than 900 events were held with 55,000 volunteers across all 50 states. To celebrate this day, all national parks that usually charge an entrance fee will offer free admission to everyone.

Learn more:

[National Park Service](#)



September 27 – Meskel

Meskel is an Ethiopian Orthodox and Eritrean Orthodox religious holiday that is celebrated annually on September 27, or September 28 during leap years. Meskel commemorates the discovery of the True Cross by St. Helena in the fourth century, and is one of the most important festivals for the laity and ordained. This gained popularity in the Ethiopian Orthodox church due to the belief that a part of the true cross was brought to Ethiopia in the 15th century and is kept at the mountain fortress Amba Geshen.

Learn more:

[Meskel Around the World](#)

