

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Advancing Equitable Opportunities



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November 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.



Lung Cancer Awareness Month

This month is dedicated to sharing information, resources, and strategies for understanding lung health, covering causes, early signs, and preventive measures. By encouraging routine screenings, healthy habits, and mindful environments, we can take proactive steps toward maintaining lung wellness. Let us use this month as an inspiring opportunity to learn, support each other, and promote healthier choices for a brighter, healthier future.

Learn more:

[Lung Cancer Foundation of America](#)

[American Association for Cancer Research](#)



National Alzheimer's Awareness Month

Although June is recognized as Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month, November also provides an opportunity to raise awareness about Alzheimer's disease. As the most common form of dementia, Alzheimer's affects millions worldwide and can progress silently for up to 20 years before symptoms become apparent. Join us in spreading awareness about this life-changing disease, so that we can foster community support and progress in research and care.

Learn more:

[Alzheimer's Foundation of America](#)

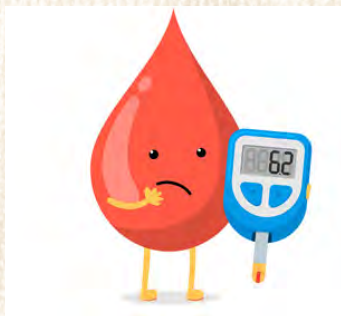


National Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Awareness Month

Taking a breath is one of the earliest actions we do in life, and it is at the core of many of our daily activities. That is why increasing awareness about Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is so important. November 18 marks **World COPD Day**, an annual global initiative dedicated to raising awareness about lung health. This day aims to educate communities, provide resources, and promote prevention strategies, highlighting the importance of early diagnosis and effective management.

Learn more:

[COPD Action Alliance](#)



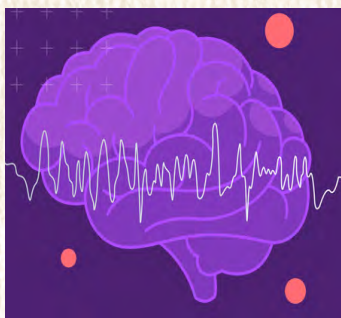
National Diabetes Month

Today, over 38 million people live with diabetes, and nearly 98 million are prediabetic, highlighting the importance of early prevention. Diabetes is a long-term condition that impacts how the body manages glucose, with Type 1 diabetes resulting from the body's inability to produce insulin, and Type 2 diabetes occurring when the body does not produce or use insulin effectively. On November 14, we observe **World Diabetes Day**, celebrating the discovery of insulin in 1922 by Sir Frederick Banting and Charles Best.

Learn more:

[International Diabetes Federation](#)

[World Health Organization](#)



National Epilepsy Awareness Month

Epilepsy is a chronic neurological disorder characterized by recurrent seizures. Seizures are temporary disruptions in brain activity that can cause a variety of symptoms including loss of consciousness or awareness, involuntary movements, changes in sensation, confusion, and emotional disturbances. National Epilepsy Awareness Month (NEAM) encourages epilepsy warriors to share their "purple power" by educating others and fostering a united community.

Learn more:

[Epilepsy Foundation](#)



National Homelessness Awareness Month

Each year in the United States, around 4.2 million youth, young adults, and teens experience homelessness. Linked below is a comprehensive report on youth homelessness published by Voices of Youth Count, which provides valuable insights and solutions. This year, November 15-21 is recognized as **Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week**, a time when organizations work to educate the public and offer resources to support those facing homelessness. Discover opportunities to help below.

Learn more:

[Voices of Youth Count](#)

[Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week](#)



Native American Heritage Month

Dr. Arthur C. Parker, a Seneca Native American, led advocacy efforts in preserving the Iroquois and Algonquian culture. In 1916, this initiated the celebration of Native American Heritage by the State of New York, which was then established in 1990 as a month-long festival. During this time, we remember the past and we celebrate the Indigenous people and cultures who impact our world today, such as Marine Colonel Nicole Mann, the first female Native American to travel to space, or former Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, the first Indigenous Cabinet member in U.S. history, among many others.

Learn more:

[The Heckscher Museum of Art](#)



Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month

The pancreas has two main functions: producing enzymes that help with digestion and creating hormones, such as insulin, that regulate how the body stores and uses glucose, the body's primary energy source. On November 19, we observe **World Pancreatic Cancer Day**. This month, you can show your support by celebrating advances in research, educating yourself and others about pancreatic health, and participating in community efforts.

Learn more:

[Pancreatic Cancer Action Network](#)

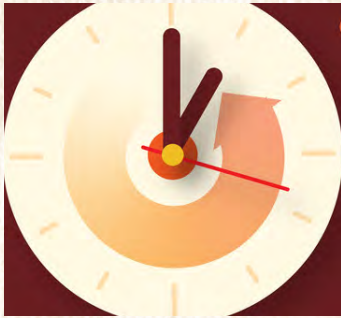


Transgender Awareness Week (November 13-19)

Each year between November 13-19, people and organizations around the country participate in Transgender Awareness Week to help raise the visibility of transgender people and address issues members of the community face. Every year on November 20, **Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR)** is observed to honor the memory of the transgender people who lost their lives due to acts of anti-transgender violence.

Learn more:

[Glaad](#)



November 1 – Daylight Saving Time (DST) Ends

As we get ready for the winter, New York and 47 other states participate in DST. In the U.S., Arizona and Hawaii do not observe DST, along with the U.S. Territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Even though it is not internationally observed, it is observed by many European countries and some Latin American and Oceania countries. Do not forget to push back your clocks an hour! This marks the return to standard time.

Learn more:

[Daylight Saving Time FAQ](#)

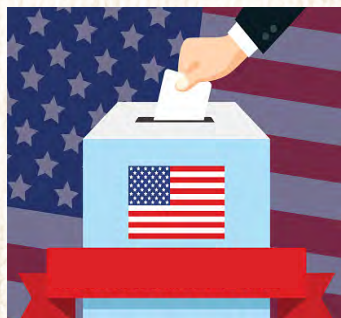


November 1-2 – Día de los Muertos

Día de los Muertos is primarily a Mexican holiday. It is a two-day holiday that reunites the living and the dead. Families create offerings to honor their departed family members that have passed. Also known as the Day of the Dead, it is commemorated through vivacious fiestas in which communities gather in town plazas to celebrate by dancing, playing music, feasting, drinking, and masquerading as Death.

Learn more:

[PBS Video: Day of the Dead](#)



November 3 – Election Day

In 1845, Congress passed a federal law designating the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November as Election Day. This year, the state of New York will be voting in the primaries to elect representatives for the Governor of New York, the U.S. House of Representatives, the New York State Senate, and other elected officials. Linked below are resources on registering to vote and viewing your county specific ballot information.

Learn more:

[Register to Vote](#)

[Ballot Information](#)



November 8 – Diwali

Diwali, often called the Festival of Lights, is celebrated by millions around the world, particularly across Hindu, Jain, Sikh, and Buddhist cultures. The festival symbolizes the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance. Lasting over five days, celebrations feature the lighting of small clay lamps called *diyas*, decorating homes with *rangoli* patterns, and illuminating streets with festive lights. Families gather to share grand meals, exchange gifts and traditional sweets, and participate in prayers. Diwali serves as a time for renewal and ushering in hope for the year ahead.

Learn more:

[National Geographic](#)

[PBS Video: A Diwali Celebration](#)



November 11 – Veterans Day

Veterans Day has its origins in Armistice Day, a holiday established to honor the end of World War I. The armistice, signed on November 11, 1918, at 11:00 a.m., marked the official ceasefire that effectively brought an end to the First World War. Initially observed as a day of remembrance for those who served in World War I, Armistice Day expanded over time to honor all military veterans. In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower officially renamed the holiday to Veterans Day, emphasizing national appreciation for the service and dedication of all U.S. military veterans.

Learn more:

[History of Veterans Day](#)



November 13 – World Kindness Day

In 1998, The World Kindness Movement introduced World Kindness Day in hopes to inspire individuals and connect nations to create a kinder world. A small act of kindness can provide a positive impact on others and often can be done with minimal effort. Studies discovered that acts of kindness are aligned to an increased feeling of well-being. Additionally, it increases self-esteem, empathy, compassion, and improves a person's mood.

Learn more:

[Save the Children](#)

[PBS Kids Talk About Kindness](#)

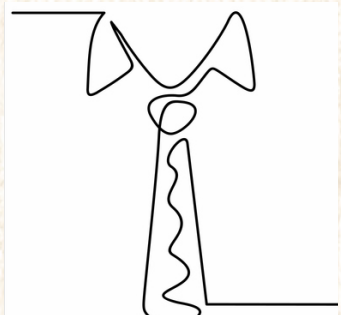


November 16 – International Day for Tolerance

International Day for Tolerance is an adaptation of the **Declaration of Principles on Tolerance** by UNESCO's members. The Declaration of Principles on Tolerance insists that tolerance is neither a service or complacency. In actuality, it is a form of showing respect and appreciation to the diverse richness of our world's cultures. Tolerance recognizes the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others. People are naturally diverse; only tolerance can ensure the survival of mixed communities in every region of the globe.

Learn more:

[UNESCO](#)

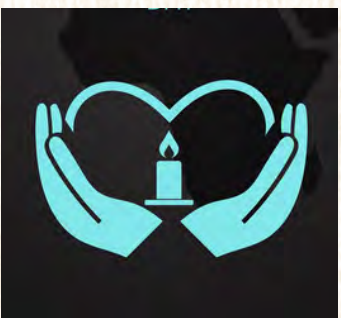


November 19 – International Men's Day

Men and boys navigate a complex world, and having positive role models can make a significant difference; whether it is supporting mental health, promoting well-being, or encouraging healthy relationships. By shining a light on the experiences of men and boys, we can facilitate important conversations, share knowledge, and build a community that offers support and encouragement. Together, we can help empower men and boys to thrive emotionally, physically, and socially, shaping a stronger, healthier future for everyone.

Learn more:

[International Men's Day](#)



November 21 – International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

This day is dedicated to honoring those who have lost someone to suicide and providing them with an opportunity to find hope through shared understanding and compassion. Among children and adolescents aged 10-24, it is the second leading cause of death, highlighting the importance of awareness and support. *If you or someone you know is experiencing thoughts of suicide, please remember that help is available. **Call or text 988** to contact the 988 Lifeline, or **text HOME to 741741** to connect with the Crisis Text Line for free, 24/7 confidential support. You are not alone, and support is always available.*

Learn more:

[988 Lifeline](#)

[Americian Foundation of Suicide Prevention](#)



November 25 – International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

This day works toward eliminating violence against women and providing support for victims. Almost one in three women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner, non-partner sexual violence, or both at least once in her lifetime. Pre-adolescent and adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable; one in four adolescent girls experience abuse by their partners. November 25-December 10 marks the **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence** with the theme “UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Ensure justice, protect survivors, end impunity.” Together, we can make a difference.

Learn more:

[United Nations](#)

[UNWOMEN](#)



November 26 – Thanksgiving Day

Thanksgiving Day is a national holiday celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November. In 1815, President James Madison proclaimed a day of Thanksgiving to be held on April 13. It was not until 1863, in the midst of the Civil War, that President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a National Thanksgiving Day to be held each November. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in hopes to provide merchants a profitable economic solution through the depression-era, declared the fourth Thursday of November, as we now celebrate as Thanksgiving, to encourage more retailing before the Christmas Holidays.

Learn more:

[Smithsonian: History](#)

[PBS Video: Thanksgiving](#)

