

EMBRACING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Look around and you will see that our society is very diverse. Diversity enriches our lives. Much as the biological diversity of an ecosystem increases its stability and productivity, cultural diversity brings together the resources and talents of many people for the shared benefit of all. Sadly, the differences among us have historically formed the basis of fear, bigotry, and even violence. Yet consider how dull life would be if we all looked alike, thought alike, and acted alike! By learning to recognize our similarities and appreciate our differences, together we can overcome prejudice and intolerance and work towards a more peaceful and productive world.

People may fear diversity simply because they are accustomed to the way things used to be and change makes them uncomfortable. Others may somehow feel threatened because they perceive increased participation by traditionally underrepresented groups in the workplace and the political process as a challenge to their own power. If left unaddressed, these fears can lead to resentment and bigotry. However, these fears can often be countered through education.

Unlike assimilation - where everyone's differences are lost in a giant melting pot - multiculturalism advocates the idea that maintaining our different cultural identities can enrich us and our communities. Multiculturalism does not promote ethnocentrism or seek to elevate one cultural identity above another. Instead, it celebrates diversity by allowing us to value our individual heritages and beliefs while respecting those of others. Respect for each others' cultural values and belief systems is an intrinsic part of cultural diversity. Lack of respect is often based on ignorance or misinformation. If you do not understand another's values, lifestyle, or beliefs, it is much easier to belittle them. And so the seeds of prejudice and intolerance are sown.

People can be categorized in many ways, such as by gender, race, religion, ethnicity, language, income, age, or sexual orientation. Unfortunately, these categories are sometimes used to label people unfairly or to saddle them with stereotypes. Stereotypes are generalized assumptions concerning the traits or characteristics of all members of a particular group. They are frequently (although not always) negative and generally incorrect. Ironically, negative stereotypes discourage closer contact, preventing the perpetrator from discovering what the individual victims of these stereotypes are really like.



Stereotypes often form the basis of prejudice, a premature judgment about a group or a member of that group made without sufficient knowledge or thought. We can also develop prejudices towards a whole group based on a single emotional experience with one person. Prejudice demonstrates an unfair bias that does not allow for individual differences, good or bad. It violates the standards of reason, justice, and tolerance.

A tolerant society is more likely to engender mutual trust and cooperation. It tends towards a more peaceful society; insofar as we are willing to learn from others, we are more able to negotiate and compromise our differences. In a tolerant society there is thus apt to be less cruelty, hypocrisy, and duplicity, less dogmatism, hatred, and fanaticism. In short, the principle of tolerance contributes to the common good and to a more humane society, and it is justified on pragmatic, consequential, and utilitarian grounds.

We set good examples of tolerance when we:

- Treat others with respect
- Avoid using stereotypes
- Make it clear that prejudice is wrong
- Don't allow bigoted comments by others, even friends or family members, to go unchallenged.

If we endow ourselves with both healthy self-esteem and respect for those who are different, we will help ourselves grow into individuals who will celebrate and embrace diversity.

Director's Corner



Fair Practices News Survey

The Office of Fair Practices rolled out its monthly newsletter in September, 2008. Over the last several months we have tried to provide DLLR employees with an informative and interesting newsletter. In order for us to continue we are interested in your thoughts on the newsletter, please take a few minutes to complete the below and let us know what you think about the newsletter. Print and return your survey to Melvin Colkley, Office of Fair Practices, Room 214, 1100 N. Eutaw Street. Your comments are invaluable to us and will assist this office in producing a quality newsletter. Thank you for your assistance.

Jennifer Dashiell Reed, Director, Office of Fair Practices.

Newsletter Survey

Is the newsletter attractive?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Is the newsletter interesting and easy to read?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

How much of the newsletter did you read?

- ☐ All of it
☐ Most of it
☐ Some of it
☐ None of it

Does the newsletter provide information important to you?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Do you keep the newsletter as a resource?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, for how long?

- ☐ One week
☐ Up to one month
☐ Until the next newsletter arrives

What do you like most about the newsletter?

What do you like least about the newsletter?

What topics would you like to see in the newsletter?

Optional - (if you don't mind us contacting you or publishing your comments.)

Name _____

Department _____

Women's Equality Day August 26, 2009

Women in the United States were given the right to vote on August 26, 1920 when the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution was signed. The amendment was first introduced many years earlier in 1878. Every president has published a proclamation for Women's Equality Day since 1971 when legislation was first introduced in Congress by Bella Abzug. This resolution was passed designating August 26 of each year as Women's Equality Day.

Resolution:

Joint Resolution of Congress, 1971 designating August 26th of each year as Women's Equality Day

WHEREAS, the women of the United States have been treated as second-class citizens and have not been entitled the full rights and privileges, public or private, legal or institutional, which are available to male citizens of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the women of the United States have united to assure that these rights and privileges are available to all citizens equally regardless of sex; and

WHEREAS, the women of the United States have designated August 26th, the anniversary date of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, as symbol of the continued fight for equal rights: and

WHEREAS, the women of United States are to be commended and supported in their organizations and activities,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that August 26th of each year is designated as "Women's Equality Day,"

August Fun Facts



August is the eighth month of the year in the Gregorian Calendar and one of seven Gregorian months with the length of 31 days. This month was originally named *Sextilis* in Latin, because it was the sixth month in the ancient Roman calendar, which started in March about 735 BC under Romulus. It was renamed in honor of Augustus in 8 BC because several of the most significant events in his rise to power, culminating in the fall of Alexandria, fell in this month. In common years no other month starts on the same day of the week as August, though in leap years February starts on the same day.

Special Observances in August...

- National Immunization Awareness Month
- National Back To School Month
- Children's Vision & Learning Month
- Happiness Happens Month
- National Fraud Awareness Week (Aug. 2-8)
- Be Kind To Humankind Week (Aug. 25-31)
- National Night Out (August 4)
- International Youth Day (August 12)



Jennifer Dashiell Reed, Director
1100 N. Eutaw Street, Rm. 214
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-230-6319 (Voice)
410-225-3282 (Fax)

August Is National Immunization Awareness Month

August is recognized as National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM). The goal of NIAM is to increase awareness about immunizations across the life span, from infants to the elderly.

August is the perfect time to remind family, friends, co-workers, and those in the community to catch up on their vaccinations. Parents are enrolling their children in school, students are entering college, and healthcare workers are preparing for the upcoming flu season.

Why are immunizations important?

Immunization is one of the most significant public health achievements of the 20th century. Vaccines have eradicated smallpox, eliminated wild poliovirus in the United States, and significantly reduced the number of cases of measles, diphtheria, rubella, pertussis and other diseases. But despite these efforts, people in the U.S. still die from these and other vaccine-preventable diseases.

Vaccines offer safe and effective protection from infectious diseases. By staying up-to-date on the recommended vaccines, individuals can protect themselves, their families and friends and their communities from serious, life-threatening infections.

Who should be immunized?

Getting immunized is a lifelong, life-protecting community effort regardless of age, sex, race, ethnic background or country of origin. Recommended vaccinations begin soon after birth and continue throughout life. Being aware of the vaccines that are recommended for infants, children, adolescents, adults of all ages and seniors, and making sure that we receive these immunizations, are critical to protecting ourselves and our communities from disease.

When are immunizations given?

Because children are particularly vulnerable to infection, most vaccines are given during the first five to six years of life. Other immunizations are recommended during adolescent or adult years and, for certain vaccines, booster immunization are recommended throughout life. Vaccines against certain diseases that may be encountered when traveling outside of the U.S. are recommended for travelers to specific regions of the world.

For more information log onto www.cdc.gov.