

# MONONGALIA COUNTY SCHOOLS DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION NEWSLETTER

December 2022

## “CELEBRATIONS ALL OVER THE WORLD”



## December is Celebrations all over the world

*Monongalia County Schools is committed to providing a mutually respectful educational environment that is welcoming to all individuals from diverse backgrounds that promotes individual development, intellectual growth, and responsible citizenship*

When people hear the word December it is often associated with the thought of Christmas. Christmas is a major holiday celebrated around the world, but people celebrate it very differently throughout the world with their own traditions.

Christmas isn't the only holiday celebrated. People celebrate Hanukkah, Kwanza, Simbang Gabi, Winter Solstice, etc. during the month of December.

A celebration isn't just a holiday. A celebration might include, a personal moment of pride or happiness, family gathering, party with friends, festival or large gathering, national holiday or feast, etc...

Studies show that cultural appreciation and awareness contribute to building a positive self-image. Developing a strong foundation of belonging and acceptance through cultural celebration and education helps children to create a diverse social network while transitioning into adulthood.

As a school system with many families from different backgrounds it is important for us to help our students learn that there are other traditions and celebrations than they are used to.

Understanding that people/families have different celebrations help our students learn to respect differences amongst each other. We may not all celebrate holidays the same way or have the same traditions, but we can all learn about others' traditions and respect them.

In Monongalia county schools we respect the traditions and celebrations that our students and families celebrate throughout the year.

## December Observations

- National Human Rights Month
- Human Rights Day- Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>

For questions or more information please contact:

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## IN THIS ISSUE

### GUARDIAN CORNER

### LOOK BACK AT LAST MONTH

GUARDIAN CORNER

THE GUARDIAN CORNER IS OPTIONAL READING FOR PARENTS THAT ARE LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES OR IDEAS AT HOME. MONONGALIA COUNTY SCHOOLS IN ONLY PROVIDING OPTIONAL RESOURCES AND RESPECTS EVERYONE’S DIFFERENCES.

These are tips that you can do at home to help teach your school-age child about different holidays.

- Learn about the holidays yourself! It can be intimidating to explain a new concept to your child when you don’t feel confident in the explanation. Take some time and do some research on different holidays. Ask yourself these questions as you are done some background work:
    - Why is this holiday celebrated?
    - What is the historical origin of the holiday?
    - What are the religious values, commercial or economic interests?
  - Don’t just focus on the holidays, but think broader and talk about family traditions. Some families may not celebrate a holiday specifically, but have a family tradition they could share.
  - Explore different cultures year-round. Holidays are one part of exploring other cultures, but incorporate year-round opportunities to learn about and explore other cultures. Think about how your child's cultural awareness and sensitivity is increased by learning this new information.
- \*West Virginia University has a lot of different opportunities throughout the year that help bring awareness and exposure to different cultures and traditions\*
- Read children’s books about different holidays. Check out your local library for activities and books available

- Try food from different cultures that is used to celebrate during the holidays. Not sure where to start? Check out a multicultural cookbook or look for recipes on the internet. Talk about why specific foods are important and part of a holiday tradition.
- Visit cultural centers or museums and explore different holiday celebrations as it relates to that specific culture.
- Visit with people that celebrate different holidays.

Exploring different holiday traditions does not take away from a child’s own celebration, but instead helps them make the connection of similarities between what they practice and what others practice. It helps them understand and appreciate other cultures and points of view and can enhance their appreciation for their own traditions.

Preview to next Month  
January is “Families come in different shapes and sizes”

This month will focus on how families can be made up of different people and sizes and showing respect for one another because of those differences.

January Observations

- No Name-Calling Week
- Korean American Day-January 13<sup>th</sup>
- National Religious Freedom Day-January 16<sup>th</sup>

*\*Please note that these are not all observations throughout the month. If any were missed that relates to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion it was not intentional\**

## Celebrating Kindness at Suncrest!

In November Suncrest celebrated with **"Superheroes Are Kind to All Cultures"**  
Suncrest Elementary and our Second Grade team also celebrated with family and community Veterans who we consider: "The Heart of America" Thank you!



## Librarian Corner

Encourage your child to check out books on celebrations and holidays this month!

*Lailah's Lunchbox: A Ramadan Story.* by Reem Faruqi. Illustrated by Lea Lyon. (2016).

*Nian, The Chinese New Year Dragon.* by Virginiaa Loh-Hagan. Illustrated by Timothy Banks. (2019).

*Queen of the Hanukkah Dosas.* by Pamela Ehrenberg. Illustrated by Anjan Sarkar. (2017).

*Binny's Diwali.* by Thrity Umrigar. Illustrated by Nidhi Chanani. (2020).


*Amira's Picture Day.* by Reem Faruqi. Illustrated by Fahmida Azim. (2021).

## Coming up in December!

We are excited that our students will be learning about the different ways families celebrate December Holidays. Our theme is **"Celebrate With Superheroes All Over the World."** Suncrest Elementary has invited all families to send in an ornament or ornaments for our school's December trees that recognizes and celebrates the December Holiday that their family celebrates or represents their unique family culture.  
The ornaments will be placed on one of our trees in the front lobby and ALL students will be able to enjoy the trees through the month of December. Families and their students are invited to send in one or many ornaments for our trees, and are encouraged to make it a family activity to plan and create together. We are going to start decorating our trees on December first.

We will continue learning with research activities in each classroom. Teachers and students will choose a winter holiday to research and make presentations about. These presentations will then be shared with the other classes in their grade levels. This way, we are celebrating the diverse winter holidays that are represented here in our school.



 Save the Date:  
Diversity Night will be  
held on Thursday,  
April 27th!