



THE BRIEN CENTER

Diversity • Equity • Inclusion • Belonging

Your courage, our care.

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2024

ARAB AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

National Arab American Heritage Month takes place in April. It celebrates the Arab American heritage and culture and pays tribute to the contributions of Arab Americans and Arabic-speaking Americans. Beginning in the 1990s, Arab American heritage was celebrated sporadically in various states at different times of the year, primarily in school districts. It wasn't until 2017 when Arab America began a national initiative to coordinate all states under National Arab American Heritage Month. On April 30, 2019, Arab American organizations asked Congresswoman Debbie Dingell to issue a congressional resolution proclaiming National Arab American Heritage Month. It was then introduced to the house on April 30, 2019, and then referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform. The largest and most promising achievement towards federal recognition of the month of April as the National Arab American Heritage Month was the proclamation published by the U.S. Department of State, which was accomplished on April 1, 2021.



NATIONAL REBUILDING MONTH

National Rebuilding Month is an annual month-long call to service during April, culminating with National Rebuilding Day, the last Saturday of the month. Throughout April, Rebuilding Together affiliates and volunteers will serve veterans, older adults, families and neighbors recovering from natural disasters by providing them with a variety of essential health and safety home repairs. Rebuilding Together provides these repairs at zero-cost to neighbors in need, who are often faced with diminishing resources and must choose food and medicine over critical home repairs. Berkshire County does not have an affiliate chapter, but that doesn't mean we can't all be mindful of the individuals in our respective communities who could use our assistance.



INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH

When you're making friends, don't be afraid to ask questions. As a best practice for inclusive language, you should only ask someone about their ethnicity when it is relevant to the conversation or if you are developing a friendship and genuinely want to learn more about this person. Never ask "What are you?," which is offensive and belittling. Instead, you might try "Which country is your family from?"; "Do you speak multiple languages?"; or "Would you feel comfortable telling me a little bit about the history of your country? I'd like to learn more." By asking respectful questions like these, you are expressing to that individual that you are genuinely interested and their lived experience is valued.

GENDER-EXPANSIVE

The term "gender-expansive" came out of a Human Rights campaign report to classify youth who did not identify with traditional gender roles but were otherwise not confined to one gender narrative or experience. This term allows us to talk about youth who don't meet our "traditional" understandings of gender without putting their identity in a box.

Questions/Comments/Suggestions for the DEI Committee?
Contact Us: DEI@briencenter.org