

MARCH toward celebrating Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging this month!



March has a lot going on in terms of equity and diversity. The month is widely known as **Women's History Month**, honoring the role of women in American history, while **March 8** is **International Women's Day**, meant to highlight the achievements of women throughout the world.

March 8 is also **Holi**, or the Festival of Colors, the Hindu holiday that marks the arrival of spring, with revelers throwing powdered dye on everyone and celebrating in the streets. The colors are significant, with red symbolizing love, marriage, and fertility, blue representing Krishna, and green denoting new beginnings. On this day, color is meant to transcend all class/caste lines, and the festivities are intended to serve as a reminder that good triumphs over evil.

March 10 is the birthday of **Harriet Tubman**, one of the most recognized American icons, an abolitionist who escaped slavery, known for being a "conductor" on the Underground Railroad while having a bounty on her head. She was also a nurse, Union spy, and women's suffrage supporter.

While **March 17, St. Patrick's Day**, is often associated with green beer and leprechauns, it is actually a Catholic Feast day, a religious holiday celebrating the arrival of Christianity in Ireland as well as Irish heritage and culture in general.

March 21 is the **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**, adopted by the UN General Assembly on October 26, 1966, to mark the day in 1960 when police opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa, against the apartheid "pass laws." Although the day started as part of a struggle to end apartheid in South Africa, the General Assembly entreated increased efforts to end all forms of racial discrimination worldwide.

Ramadan, Islam's sacred month, begins the evening of **March 22** and ends the evening of April 21 with the Eid al-Fitr holiday, or "breaking of the fast" on April 22 (dates can vary). For each day of Ramadan, Muslims abstain from eating or drinking — including water — while the sun is out. When the sun sets, the "Iftar" meal is often celebrated as a community. Unlike other religious days or heritage months, Ramadan follows the Islamic calendar, which is based on the lunar cycle, and therefore changes each year, with significantly longer fasting periods during summer months.

March is also **Developmental Disability Awareness Month**, recognized in 1987 by President Ronald Reagan to increase public awareness of the needs and the potential of Americans with developmental disabilities and to provide the "encouragement and opportunities they need to lead productive lives and to achieve their full potential."

How is your school celebrating any of these important themes this month?



Resources:

Developmental Disability Awareness Month

www.nationaldisabilityinstitute.org/press/march-is-developmental-disabilities-awareness-month/dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Celebrate-Developmental-Disabilities-Awareness-Month-.aspx

Harriet Tubman

<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/harriet-tubman>
www.harriettubman.com/day.html

Holi

www.holifestival.org/
www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/holi-festival-colors-meaning-180958119/

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

www.un.org/en/observances/end-racism-day
<https://www.unesco.org/en/days/racial-discrimination-elimination>

International Women's Day

www.internationalwomensday.com/
www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/in-focus/2023/03/in-focus-international-womens-day

Ramadan

www.history.com/topics/holidays/ramadan
www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/ramadan

St. Patrick's Day

www.history.com/topics/st-patricks-day/history-of-st-patricks-day
www.ireland.com/en-us/things-to-do/themes/culture/st-patricks-day/

Women's History Month

<https://womenshistorymonth.gov/>
<https://www.womenshistory.org/womens-history/womens-history-month>

Submitted for NACRAO's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Committee by Susan Stephenson