

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging Electronic Magazine

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DEIB Value Statement

At Enterprise Bank, people and relationships come first. We encourage and foster a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging where everyone feels valued and respected. We are committed to a caring workplace that recognizes the importance of making a meaningful, positive difference in the lives of our team members, customers, and communities. Please [click here](#) for more information. To learn about Enterprise Bank's history and core values, [click here](#).

Welcome to Spring!

Now is Our Time to Rejuvenate and Remain Committed!

April 2024 is finally here, and hopefully many of us are looking forward to enjoying the longer, sunnier days to come with these new seasons of spring and summer ahead of us. Although there is a lot to look forward to, it is also important for us to make time to reflect on current events which are taking place in the world around us.

Recent headlines, as they relate to DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging), have been concerning. Some state-run colleges in Florida, other parts of the South, and the Midwest are making news headlines talking as they work to eliminate DEIB programs in order to stay compliant with recent state laws which prohibit publicly run institutions from using state and federal funds as resources towards these types of expenditures. Some people are proud to see the elimination of this work, while other people are concerned about how the elimination of programs will impact generations to come. [According to an NBC News analysis](#) from March 2, 2024, in the current legislative session, lawmakers in more than 30 states have introduced or passed more than 100 bills to either restrict or regulate DEI efforts, which seems to be a growing trend. When I see this type of movement, it leads me to wonder if, when, and how it could impact people I know? Will this trend make its way to places where my family, friends, and I live and work?

Being here in New England, after having been raised in the Midwest, and having even deeper roots going back many generations within the Southern United States, I often wonder if these trends are culturally based by region. Or is it something else that drives the polarization where people can't seem to find the middle ground needed in order to heal some of the historical rifts that continue to plague us as a nation?

While the idea of doing DEIB work feels like a middle ground to people like me, the idea of promoting awareness about our cultural, ethnic, racial, and other facets of human identity feel threatening to others. I am not sure how to build a bridge for those who need it, but yet I remain committed to doing this work because I don't see any other way towards continued progress without making the effort to discuss, build relationships, and trust with one another as individuals as we are all impacted by a reality where the goal of shared success requires us to deeply care for one another's needs and humanity.

As we look ahead to the warmer, brighter days of the spring and summer season ahead, I hope we can also take time to reflect and remain aware of current events. Vacation season will soon be upon us, but there is no vacation when it comes to doing the work of ensuring all of us have a place to feel that we belong. Perhaps these trends and news headlines are a reminder to stay aware and to stay vigilant in our care for one another.



May we all make plans to rest, rejuvenate and relax this season, so that we can continue to have the strength and fortitude to do this ongoing work. Whether it be writing for the e-Zine, volunteering to be featured in our new Diversity Spotlight series, or attending the Bank's DEIB programming throughout the year, and participating in some of the many ongoing and vibrant community events. Be well!

Kira Morehouse

Digital Marketing Manager, VP

Personal views and opinions expressed here are those of individual volunteer contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Enterprise Bank.

Employee Resource Group Corner

What is an Employee Resource Group (ERG)?

Employee resource groups (ERGs) are employee groups that come together voluntarily around a common interest or background. At Enterprise Bank, we have the below five ERGs in place. We'd like to encourage all team members to get involved, or attend and enjoy our events! Please visit our ERG [page](#) for more information.

Everyone is welcome to join our ERGs. If interested, please contact any of the following:

ERG Name	ERG Leader(s)
Multicultural Alliance	Co-Chairs: Prema Nagathan and Sophy Theam Treasurer: Darshika Jain
Pride C.O.R.P.S.	Co-Chairs: Eddie Enea and Megan Pardoe
Veterans Resource Group	Co-Chair: Karen Merrill
Working Parents Resource Group	Co-Chairs: Maryann Cash and Donna Saati
Young Professionals Resource Group	Co-Chairs: Samantha McNally and Jennifer Ingle

World Autism Awareness Month (April)

April 2nd—World Autism Day

By: Megan Pardoe

April 2nd is a United Nations recognized day for autism awareness. This often folds over to the whole month of April called Autism Awareness Month. This was enacted in 2007 by the UN General Assembly and was first celebrated in 2008. The goal of autism Awareness Month is to encourage the recognition of autistic people and push for autism to be accepted into society. Autistic people often are met with ableism which forces them to act a certain way or be treated differently because they are autistic. World Autism Awareness Month and Autism Awareness Day wants to fight against this stigma.

Being diagnosed with autism is a wide spectrum and each person is different from the next, so trying to provide people with help and understanding is hard. This is especially seen in children who are autistic. I interviewed Jonathan Mahan (my fiancé) who is a Special Education Assistant at a local elementary school. He works with children aged 6-11 who may have autism.



Can you give us an introduction?

My name is Jonathan Mahan. I'm 25 years old and I work at an elementary school. I'm also Megan's fiancé.

What is your role and what does it entail?

Currently I'm a Special Education Assistant at an elementary school for children with special needs. My role is to assist different children acting as a "one on one" aide to them. I help them with their school-work, assist with their needs, and help manage many forms of acting out or attention needed.

What have you learned from working with children with autism?

I work with a lot of children who have different diagnoses and are on different levels of the autism spectrum. Some of them have formal plans we follow called IEP's and others don't. I have learned so much from my job. I would say the first thing I learned is that every child is different. What works on one may not work on another. Also, these children work so hard to adapt to the world around them and they have a lot going on. Some things can be seen, and others cannot. I've also learned to have a lot of patience with them. Sometimes it's hard to practice patience and have follow through with each child but it is fully worth it.

Is there any difference working with children who have autism and those who do not?

I'm lucky enough to work with a variety of children of all age groups and different backgrounds. That includes different forms of autism and other disabilities. I would say that there are differences with working with any child. Each child is different and learns in a different way, need different levels of attention, and have different emotions and ways of responding. There is no difference from working with children with autism or without.

What is your favorite memory or story from your time working at your school?

My favorite memory so far from my experience at my school is helping a 10-year-old boy with his social communication issues. This child is very smart but socially tends to keep to himself. He loves to play Minecraft and has such a strong passion for it. I came on as his one to one to help him grow socially. I was able to connect with him and help reach out to his peers. He now is way more engaged with the other boys in his class and doesn't need a one-to-one. That made me very happy, and I was glad that the work I did truly has helped him.

Jonathan's interview is very empowering and really shows that having autism is something to be celebrated and doesn't have to be looked away from. Having autism isn't uncommon, as 1 in 36 children in the US have autism and 1 in 45 adults in the US also have autism. This April we need to recognize that autism is a part of many people's lives and doesn't have to be faced with stigma.

Resources:

Autism Resources Center: Autism Resource Center (aacap.org)

Autism Society: Autism Society Creating connections for the Autism community to live fully.

Mass.gov: Autism Resources for Families | Mass.gov

New Hampshire Family Voices: NHFV Autism Connection - New Hampshire Family Voices

The Autism Project: Family Support | The Autism Project

Sources:

Autismsociety.org/autism-acceptance-month/

World Autism Awareness Day - Wikiwand

Passover (April 22nd—April 30th)

By Kevin Bruckenstein



Passover, or Pesach in Hebrew, is one of Judaism's most widely celebrated holidays. The week-long holiday commemorates the enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt and their subsequent escape.

The story of Passover, found in the book of Exodus in the Hebrew Bible (the Torah), recounts how Israelites settled in Egypt and lived there in harmony for many generations until a hostile Pharaoh, fearing the growth of the Israelite's population, enslaved them and ordered that Jewish newborn males be killed. One Israelite woman, upon giving birth to a baby boy, placed her baby in a basket and set him floating down the Nile River near where people would bathe in an attempt to save him. The baby was found by the Pharaoh's daughter who rescued him, named him Moses, and raised him as her own.

In adulthood, Moses came to learn of his true identity, and upon encountering a burning bush (that remained undamaged), received a message from God. God commanded Moses to return to Egypt and free the Israelites from slavery. Moses went to the Pharaoh and demanded that he free the Jews ("Let my people go," Moses tells Pharaoh in Exodus 5:1), but the Pharaoh refused. Thus, God set a series of ten plagues upon the Egyptians until the Pharaoh released the Jews, culminating in a plague that brought death to Egyptians' firstborn sons; however, God tells Moses to have the Israelites mark their doorframes with lamb's blood so that the plague would pass over their homes (hence, "Passover"), sparing their families.

Following the tenth plague, which claimed the life of the Pharaoh's firstborn son, the Pharaoh finally released the Israelites. They quickly packed and fled Egypt, not even sparing enough time to even allow for their bread to rise in their haste (hence the holiday's prohibition on eating leavened, or risen, grain products, and the custom of eating matzah—unleavened bread).

However, the Pharaoh soon regretted his decision and led his army in pursuit of the Israelites. He and his army chased the Israelites and trapped them at the shore of the Red Sea.

Passover, cont'd

As all hope seemed lost, God spoke to Moses, instructing him to lift his staff over the sea. Moses did so and a miracle occurred—God split the sea, enabling the Israelites to walk across the sea floor to the opposite shore. Once the final Israelite had crossed, the sea closed anew, drowning the pursuing Pharaoh and soldiers.

Passover Seder & Traditions

The seder is the ritual meal that is the centerpiece of Passover celebrations. Traditional foods represent elements of the story, including shank bone (zeroa), egg (beitzah), bitter herbs (maror), vegetables (karpas), and a sweet paste called haroset. During the seder, participants read from a special text called the Haggadah—a guide to the rite—and recount the story of Passover. During a traditional seder, participants eat unleavened bread, or matzah, three times, drink wine four times, and taste each symbolic food item from the seder plate in turn at specified points.

When I was a child, my family would always go to my great aunt and uncle's house to celebrate Passover; we lived in New York at the time, as did most of my dad's side of the family. I remember it being one of the few, if not only, times a year we would all get together—but we did it every single year.

My great uncle would always lead the seder, reading from the Haggadah. I remember there being parts in Hebrew, which he would always read, and then one of the other members of the family (oftentimes children) would read the English translations.

Children actually have a special role in the seder: during the maggid, the main storytelling portion of the seder, in which we retell the basic story of the Exodus from Egypt, describe the various ritual items of the seder, and recite Dayenu and the Mah Nishtanah—the youngest person at the seder traditionally asks the Four Questions (Mah Nishtanah). These questions ask about what makes Passover different from all other nights and set the stage for telling the story of the holiday. Both Mah Nishtanah and Dayenu are often sung at the seder in Hebrew. To this day, as someone who doesn't speak any Hebrew, I can remember some of the lyrics from my time singing the songs as a child, and I can vividly remember their melodies.

Another common tradition is the hiding of the afikomen, a piece of broken matzoh. Before guests would arrive, my great uncle would wrap matzoh in a cloth and hide the afikomen somewhere in the house. After the seder, the kids would dash off to search for it. I remember that being the most fun part of the night for me, competing against my brothers and cousins to be the one to find it. When one of us found it, we would bring it back to my great uncle. He (and sometimes some of the other adults) would give each of the children a few bucks as a reward.

I don't think I've been to a family Passover seder as large as those early ones since childhood. My family moved to Florida right before my ninth birthday, and as I grew up, I stopped being religious. Even though I don't attend Passover seders anymore, I'll never forget them from when I was a child. The time spent with family that I rarely saw, the impact they had on me culturally as a Jew, the songs, traditions, and practices that stuck with me all these years. While every seder is a bit different, governed by community and family traditions, the way we held our Passover seder will always be something that bonds me to my extended family and the celebration of the holiday. To me, commemorating the history of the Jewish people, will be something that always ties me to my Jewish heritage.

Arab American Heritage Month (April)

By: Kira Morehouse

Trivia Question: What state in the U.S.A. has the largest population of people of Arab heritage?

Answer: Michigan!

(Source: arabamerica.com)

Yes, Michigan is home to one of the largest, oldest, and most diverse Arab American communities in the United States forming a major cultural center. Note, I do not claim to be of Arab heritage, personally. However, I felt moved to write something in honor of Arab Heritage month based on some proximity from having grown up in Michigan. I can fondly appreciate more than a few memories from there being a large community presence.

The Arab American community as a whole is very diverse especially according to different factors such as nationality and religion. According to the United State Census, the Michigan Arab American population consists of multiple nationality groups including Lebanese/Syrian, Palestinian/Jordanian, Egyptian, Iraqi/Chaldean, Moroccan, Yemeni, and more. Communities have mostly been centered geographically around the American cities of Detroit, New York, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. In the towns of East Lansing and Lansing, Michigan, where I grew up, more than half of the community identified as either Lebanese or Iraqi/Chaldean. I had friends, classmates, colleagues as a teenager

entering the workforce, and acquaintances throughout the community with whom I was fortunate to share in some of their culture (and I miss this aspect of where I grew up). Food, in particular was one of the things I loved to enjoy, being in proximity to the Arab American community.

When I was very young, elementary school age, I recall having my first bite of falafel from an authentic family run business at the time (Woody's Oasis). It was one of my favorite places to eat on a regular basis with my mother, because the food was fresh and in hindsight, I believe it was healthy, and always tasty. There would be all types of ethnic music playing when we dined in, and we were regulars to the point where the owners knew us and were always welcoming. As I have grown older, and moved away from that area, I have tried to find comparable falafel which included fresh pickled vegetables and specific spices added to the deep-fried chickpea balls, drizzled with Tahini sauce, and wrapped in fresh pita bread. Between this specific dish, and the Baklava (Baklawa) fingers, I have yet to find any that tastes as good. If I could, then I am sure it would bring me right back to that timeframe of my youth, in my mind. (Do I have any Arab American friends reading this who could offer some local recommendations?)



(Royalty Free Photo Image of Falafel by [Pille R. Priske](#) on [Unsplash](#))

As I grew older, in high school during the late 1990's, I ended up founding an extracurricular Multicultural Awareness Club sponsored by my Social Studies teacher (Ms. Barber). Through that club, I made more friends from across many ethnic groups, but as the Multicultural Club President I also ended up attending some of their own diversity groups such as the Arab American Club. This is how I learned that Michigan, especially Detroit, had a large community and we got to plan activities that would help others learn more about the culture and heritage. There was a field trip to a place known as "Chaldean Town" just outside of Detroit in a smaller city, Dearborn, where the Arab American National Museum is located.

Most of the community in this area are of Middle Eastern origin with the majority being Christian, and also including Maronites, Melkites, and Eastern Orthodox religious backgrounds. Some immigrants were Sunni Muslims and Shia Muslims. In the early 1900's, Detroit newspaper articles referred to "Detroit's Colony of Syrians" who became peddlers and shopkeepers. Similarly, as to how my own relatives who migrated from the Southern United States, many Arab American immigrants were also employed through the automobile manufacturing industry, working in Henry Ford's factories.

"In 1930, the community grew to 9,000 Arabic-speakers, with two-third being of Syrian heritage. After 1920 the [Ottoman Empire](#) collapsed and European colonial administrators divided the areas in the Levant into [Lebanon](#), Palestine, and [Syria](#). Therefore, immigrants into the Detroit began to be classified as Lebanese, Palestinians, and Syrians ... Around 1951, there were about 50,000 people in Detroit who had descent from Lebanon and Syria. Around the same year, there were about 4,000 to 5,000 persons in Detroit and Dearborn who had origins from the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, Yemen, and other Middle Eastern countries. Sally Howell, author of "Competing for Muslims: New Strategies for Urban Renewal in Detroit", wrote that Yemeni people had a presence in the area since the late 1960s. Arab immigrants continued traveling to Detroit even after the automobile industry decline of the 1970s. A wave of immigration to Detroit was also driven by the Lebanese Civil War from 1975 – 1990, the Gulf War of 1991, and the Iraq War of 2003." (Source: [Wikipedia](#)).

Ultimately, many of my fond memories were the result of world history and economic events that thankfully landed my family alongside some of our Arab American friends and neighbors. I will always be grateful for having had the opportunity to experience some small bit of Arab American culture through appreciation, curiosity, as well as a love of learning about people and their heritage. Hopefully, this sharing has helped spread some useful awareness during this month of April being Arab American Heritage Month.



We wish a joyous celebration and a happy, healthy, and prosperous new year

to our friends from the countries of Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Laos, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

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National Volunteer Month

By: Megan Pardoe

Every April since 1943 the United States has Celebrated Volunteer Week or Volunteer Month. This recognition for altruistic people began during World War II. In 1943 National Volunteer Week was first held in Canada and the United States. This was to recognize the challenging work of women collecting supplies and helping wounded soldiers during the war. It was during this time in the 20th century when volunteering was at an all-time high and the creation of many volunteer organizations had begun. Many of these still operate today, such as the Red Cross.



Once the war was over, volunteer recognition was scaled back, it was still celebrated greatly each April. In 1974 the American government formally recognized National Volunteer Week in April. This later went on to become National Volunteer Month and in 1990 was made an official worldwide recognition. In 2003 the President's Volunteer Service Award was created and recognized volunteers for their lengthy dedication to helping others.

(The Nashua region gathered donations for the Greater Nashua's United Way "Shoebbox Project for Seniors".)

Here at Enterprise Bank, one of our core values is community and giving back to the people and organizations near us. Here are some recent pictures of volunteer work that our fellow team members have done in the past few months.



(The Hudson Branch hosted a "Mardi Gras" themed Business After Hours for the Hudson Chamber of Commerce.)



Team members from the Marketing Department and Community/Customer Experience Department spent time sorting shoes for the Belle of the Ball Charity Event.



The Tyngsboro Branch managers sponsored a table for the Wreath's Across America Event put on by the Fire Department.



The Lexington Branch held a First Responder's Appreciation Breakfast with the Police Department.

This April we should all take time to reflect on the wonderful volunteers that lend their time to help different organizations and people across the world. Here at Enterprise Bank, we strive to help our community and make it a better place. Our team members do so by volunteering for great events and organizations like those above. This year let's all try to do some more volunteer work!

Source: <https://nationaltoday.com/national-volunteer-month/rces/>

My MS Journey

By: Jennifer Nicholson,
*Learning & Development and Engagement
Program Specialist*



It started with tingling in my feet. Within 12 hours my feet went numb. Within 72 hours I no longer had feeling from the waist down. I found myself hospitalized for 5 days and received the diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis. My life would never be the same.

When I reflect, the signs were there for over ten years. Migraine headaches, always being unbalanced, constant ringing in the ears, vertigo attacks, trips, and falls. I thought I just had severe anxiety. I would wonder if family and friends probably thought I was making it all up.

On April 2, 2022, when I got the confirmed diagnosis from the doctor, I felt an overwhelming sense of relief, which is not always the case. Many people have a sudden, adverse event that occurs out of the blue which leads to a diagnosis. I finally had answers and a direction of what I needed to do. It wouldn't be easy – sitting in the MRI for 2 ½ hours at a time, mountains of bloodwork and testing, figuring out treatment options, doctors appointments, and physical therapy, learning to walk and balance again – overall learning my “new normal”.



Multiple Sclerosis is an unpredictable disease of the central nervous system that disrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and body. The disease impacts the brain, spinal cord, and optic nerves, which makes up the central nervous system and controls everything we do and feel. Something triggers the immune system to attack the central nervous system. The resulting damage to myelin, the protective layer insulating nerve fibers, disrupts signals to and from the brain.

This interruption of communication signals causes unpredictable symptoms such as numbness, tingling, mood changes, memory problems, pain, fatigue, blindness, and paralysis. Everyone's experience with MS is unique and these losses may be temporary or long lasting. (National Multiple Sclerosis Society).

Daily tasks can be hard. Some days are better than others, however, I wouldn't trade the connections I have made since my diagnosis. I have a wonderful group that I found through the MS Society that I meet with a couple times per month. I have found support through the new friends I have made, that share similar experiences and understand what it feels like.

March is MS Awareness Month, so there has been a lot more information put out about the disease. Recently, celebrities such as Selma Blair, Christina Applegate, and Jamie Lynn Sigler have shared their experiences of strength and hope. You can listen to their new weekly podcast, MeSSy, which premiered on March 19.

Mother's Day

By: Tenesha Scarlett

Mother's Day can be looked at from a variety of perspectives. Some women are mothers from having children and some women are mothers from raising children. As the old saying goes, it takes a village. I was part of that village growing up. My mother had me at a young age, however, it was my village that raised me. Due to my mother's young age, I looked to my grandmother (Nana) who helped raise me and shaped me into the person I am today. I believe that being a mother is a gift. Whether it's the children you bring into this world, or those who are brought into your life, it's a very impactful and important role to hold.



I know many women who, unfortunately, couldn't "bare" their own children, but are some of the best mothers I have come across. I, myself, have been fortunate enough to be a creator of life. I have been blessed with amazing children and do not take that for granted. My nana used to say that our children are a reflection of ourselves. I can't lie, they are like human mirrors. I'm a mother of two amazing boys and I see a bit of myself in each of them.

I appreciate being a mother. I enjoy all of the milestones that they've had thus far in life and would love to be blessed to see them flourish into adulthood and have their own memories to create. I think of the future for them and their potential for greatness. I also, as probably most parents do, worry about the things that we cannot control.



On Mother's Day, I reflect on the day that both of my children were born. I think about all of the love and joy that I experienced with my village and how much I want to do every single thing I can to protect my boys and ensure that I will not fail them. I think of all the memories I will make and also all the mistakes I will make. I also think, why am I overthinking everything? That's what we do as mothers. We smother. We love so hard. We try our best to be a shield, a protector, the doer of all things. Superwoman.

I also question, why is this the pressure we put on ourselves? It's okay to not be perfect. It's okay to wait on the laundry. It's okay if your house is a mess sometimes. Motherhood is not defined by those simple things. As a mother, whatever your capacity, ask your children what they think about YOU... in doing that, you will understand that everything you are doing is... just... fine.



I challenge you to make those memories. Make those moments. Our children love and appreciate us more than we could ever imagine.

Filipino Heritage Month

By: Roselyn Scales

Kumusta! Ang pangalan ko ay Roselyn Scales. Ako ang Community Relations Coordinator sa Enterprise Bank. Ako ay Filipina. Translation from Tagalog (language in the Philippines) to English: Hello! My name is Roselyn Scales. I am the Community Relations Coordinator at Enterprise Bank. I am Filipina.

Born in the Philippines, my father arrived in the United States in 1962 at the age of nineteen after touring various countries like Egypt, France, and Germany with his mother and sister. He later enrolled at Boston University and Bentley College, finishing with a degree in accounting. My mother arrived in the United States in 1966 at the age of twenty as an exchange student with a degree in Chemistry to work in Cambridge, MA conducting medical research. My sister and I were born in Boston.

Being Filipina/American, I feel blessed to have grown up in two cultures and share all my experiences, traditions, and things about the Filipino culture with my children. I may not speak the language, but I can understand it (which gave me an advantage during Spanish class in high school). I may not be able to cook many traditional Filipino dishes, but I enjoy eating them and learning how to cook my favorite dishes from my mother. I have traveled to the Philippines (a long flight-about 22 hours by plane) to see where our parents grew up and meet family.

Fun facts I would like to share about the Philippines:



Royalty Free Clip Art Shown to the left:

The national flag of the Philippines consists of two bands, one blue and one red, and a white triangle. The triangle has a yellow sun with eight rays representing different provinces and three stars representing the main island groups. The flag is flown with the blue band on top. If flown upside down, it signifies the country is in a state of war.

The national language of the Philippines is Tagalog, with English being the other official language.

There are between 120-180 languages spoken in the Philippines. Tagalog and English are the languages taught in school. Tagalog words are similar to, or the same as, many words in Spanish language.

The Philippines covers over 7,000 islands, and Roman Catholic is the predominant religion.

Jeepneys are the primary mode of transportation. Jeepneys are custom buses created from military jeeps left by Americans in 1946. They are fitted with benches and decorated with bright colors and designs. I personally had the pleasure of riding a few jeepneys during my first trip to the Philippines when I was eight years old!



Royalty Free Photo Image, a Jeepney, by [Yannes Kiefer](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Popular Filipino dishes: Lechon (whole roasted pig), Lumpia (fried eggrolls), Sinigang (soup with meat, fish, vegetables, and tomatoes), Pork or Chicken Adobo, Pancit (noodles), and our staple, Rice.

Famous Filipinos/Filipino Americans: **Lea Salonga** – Tony award winning singer/actress including songs on Disney's Aladdin & Mulan soundtracks; **Bruno Mars** – Grammy award winning singer-songwriter; **Manny Pacquiao** – Professional Boxer; **Lou Diamond Phillips** – Hollywood Actor who starred in numerous Box Office films such as La Bamba, Stand and Deliver, and Young Guns; **Jo-Koy** – Comedian and Actor, just to name a few.

Pride Month and Beyond: LGBTQIA+ Holidays!

By: Megan Pardoe

Many people know that the month of June is known as Pride Month, which is the celebration of the movement for LGBTQIA+ rights and celebrates the culture behind history. June was declared pride month after the famous Stonewall Riots in June of 1969 and then was federally recognized by President Bill Clinton in 1999. Although Pride Month is a key celebration for the community there are also other important holidays that fall before June.



April 14th marks this year's National Day of Silence protest led by LGBTQIA+ students and allies that take a vow of silence to protest discrimination of LGBTQIA+ people in schools worldwide. National Day of Silence was started in 1996 by a University of Virginia student, Maria Pulzetti, who felt that gay youth were being harassed on campus, and the administration wasn't taking this seriously. One year later over 100 schools were participating worldwide and then in 2000, one of the largest LGBTQIA+ education networks, GLSEN, adopted this as their project, leading to millions of students participating. During this day, students pass out cards about why they are not speaking, put tape, or draw an X across their mouth, and then end the silence with a rally to end the vow together and fight against discrimination. In 2023, in Massachusetts, the National Day of Silence took place at different levels of education.



Students vowed to not speak at the University of Massachusetts Campus and had a meeting with the Dean. Wellesley Middle School staged a day of silence as well and was supported by their GSA. Students were allowed to practice this vow all day with a permission slip. National Day of Silence started and continues to be a student lead protest against discrimination of the LGBTQIA+ community and students of all ages participate every year.

May 17th is the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia. This was created in 2004 and was celebrated for the first time a year later in 2005. The goal of the holiday is to raise awareness about violence, repression, and discrimination of the LGBT+ people. Common activities held on May 17th are marches, parades, festivals, and arts and culture-based events. From 2021, this holiday has been recognized in over 130 countries and events will be held this year. The theme for this year's celebration is "No One left Behind: Equality, Freedom and Justice for all". The theme this year focuses on the growing list of anti LGBTQIA+ laws around the world and how we can protect those in our communities. The International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia is a much-needed holiday. It not only reminds us of what hate the LGBTQ+ faces but also how we can stop this hate.



Both the National Day of Silence and the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia are key days for the LGBTQIA+ community. These days celebrate the community and fight against discrimination towards people in our communities. These fall before Pride Month but still play a key role in the community. After these two holidays comes Pride Month in June. The whole month is marked with celebrations, parades, events, and love. The Pride CORPS at the Bank will be volunteering and attending a few events this June. The first is **June 2nd in Tewksbury**. There will be a Pride Picnic from 12pm to 3pm. **Lowell Pride** falls on **June 15th** from 12pm to 5pm. Lastly, **Nashua Pride** is **June 22nd**, and will feature a parade and gathering from 12pm to 5pm. We'd love to see you at these events!

Sources:

Day of Silence (nationaltoday.com)

Wellesley Middle School stages "Day of Silence" - Parents Defending Education

News ~ May17.org

Lowell Pride

Juneteenth (June 19th)

By: Tenesha Scarlett

What is Juneteenth? To some, it is an unknown holiday. For many descendants of enslaved people in America, it is *our* Independence Day. As many may or may not know, the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect by President Lincoln on January 1st, 1863. This was made to proclaim that all slaves, particularly in the “rebellious states” shall be free. Unfortunately, word didn’t reach all of the states immediately. The last state to receive this proclamation was in Texas, Galveston to be exact. The date was June 19th, 1865 (June + 19th = Juneteenth). This was over 2 years later! Although confederate states knew that their slaves, under law, should be free, many resisted. Union soldiers arrived in Texas, and informed enslaved people that they were free by an executive decree. At that time there were over a quarter of a million Black people still enslaved. The Union soldiers in this country played a big role in getting the message out across America. You must think, this is before social media, cell phones, and all the technology that we have now, so it took some time. The effort made by those soldiers is immeasurable. They marched across the nation, spreading the word on each plantation to inform the slaves that they were indeed... free!

The first official celebration of this “2nd Independence Day,” began in 1866. Initially it was mostly community gatherings put on by Black churches. In the 1920s into the 1930s, the celebration grew into more of a festival, complete with food, parties and parades. Some other names are Jubilee Day, Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, and Black Independence Day. Juneteenth is noted as the longest running African American Holiday in the United States. It became a federal holiday on June 19th 2021.

Currently, Juneteenth is widely celebrated across the U.S. via local community celebrations. In Lowell, we have been celebrating through our African American non-profits to bring about awareness and education on what this holiday means to us. I personally have worked with grassroots community organizations such as the Free Soil Arts Collective and the Afro American Community Collaborative. In these events we celebrate with music, food, and bring more awareness to the culture. One staple for sure is celebrating through song, singing the Black national anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” I am always honored to be a part of the celebrations and look forward to growing this event each and every year that we are blessed to bring it to the community.



Travelogues

Autumn Ouellet: Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

On Wednesday, January 31st, my mother, aunt, and I took off to Punta Cana for my cousin’s destination wedding and stayed at the Hyatt Ziva Cap Cana all-inclusive resort! It was a great chance to see my long-distance uncle and his wife while meeting their friends and family that I had only heard of in stories when my aunt and uncle, who live in Chicago, would come to visit.

Our travel day there did not exactly go as planned. As we were about to take off from Boston, our plane had technical difficulties and we were “kicked off” and told to wait a few hours until the next one arrived. This unfortunately meant we would miss our connecting flight and overall ended up landing in Punta Cana 6 hours later than we should have. As soon as we arrived at the resort,



Travelogues

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we encountered an issue with checking in. My mom and aunt were good to go, however the resort had no record of my name on their guestlist! Thankfully we booked through a travel agent and had our confirmation papers printed. About an hour later, they found me! After 17 long hours of traveling and waiting, relaxation could finally kick in!

Our second day began bright and early with a catamaran boat ride. At our first stop, we went snorkeling with fish in the coral reefs off the coast of Punta Cana. We then stopped in a shallower area to swim and go paddle boarding. I was able to stand on the board for a brief period and even do some paddling before completely falling into the ocean. I unfortunately couldn't master the art of "turning" but still had a great time!

Friday was the big day! We had a relaxing morning, sitting on the beach until it was time to get ready to head over to the wedding. The venue was absolutely stunning, and the ceremony was beautiful! The bride and groom requested an "unplugged" wedding so the guests would be fully in the moment, so I unfortunately don't have any photos of the wedding itself to share.

On our last full day, we were able to fully explore our resort. In the back was a huge waterpark where my mom, aunt and I took multiple laps around the lazy river and even went down a couple waterslides. We spent the rest of the day alternating between the pool and the beach, soaking up the last of the warm sun before we went back to cold and snowy New England.



Overall, we had a great time eating amazing food, enjoying great drinks, including mamajuana, which is the national drink of the Dominican Republic, and spending quality time with family while creating great new memories.

The travel experience on the first day was frustrating, but it proved as a reminder that things can happen out of our control. The best we can do in this scenario is to remain calm and go with the flow because so much good is yet to come. I had such a great time visiting Punta Cana, and I cannot wait to return someday!

Travelogues

Sophy Theam: Hawai'i (The Big Island)

From February 13—February 26, 2024, our family had the opportunity of a lifetime to visit paradise! This was our first trip to Hawaii. We took our mom, who's turning 70 in July as this was one of her dream vacation locations. We were only able to visit one island—the Big Island, which was just the size of Connecticut...but wow, we were so fascinated by the fact that the whole island had 10 different climate zones, and that we were able to visit active volcanoes! Please enjoy the following photos!

Travelogues

Sophy Theam: Hawai'i (The Big Island)



The front yard of Phoenix Garden. We stayed on the second floor of this house, which was built by the owner. He escaped the brutal winters of Michigan twelve years prior and never left! Many buildings and locations referenced the Phoenix, which is a mythical bird that rose from the ashes into something beautiful, so suitable for this youngest island of Hawaii which kept rising from the ashes after the eruptions of the volcanoes!



Hawaii is home to many unique species of plants and animals. The only way we knew that these blue flowers were real and not some plastic ornament was because the ground was covered with dead blue flowers that had dropped. I did a little research and found out that these were called Blue Jade Vine. So beautiful and magical!

Speaking of beautiful things rising from the ashes, when we visited the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, we saw coming out of black lava rock just about everywhere (but sparsely spread out) were the Ohi'a Lehua (the Big Island's trademark flower).



Travelogues



Steam is coming out of the crater of Mauna Kilauea at Hawai'i Volcanoes Nat'l Park! And we were also able to be just feet away from natural steam vents. Very surreal!



Our first six days and five nights were spent on the southeast side of the Big Island where the rainforest resided, and home to many natural wonders. This is a geothermal pool called the Pohoiki Hot Springs, located near Pahoa. Because the ocean water was generally really rough for swimming, we were pleasantly surprised that there were several pools that were so warm, and they allowed us to swim and bathe in them!

On our final day in Pahoa, just as we were leaving this part of the island, we came across a huge farmer's market on the side of the main road, called the Maku'u Farmer's Market. We were like in heaven as we had been on the hunt for these tropical fruits (that were familiar to us because Cambodia had these as well). Rambutan, Sour Sop, Mangosteen, this fruit we call the "Milk Fruit", sweet mangoes—which was off season everywhere, apparently! And not only did we find them, but the prices here were amazing, definitely cheaper than in Massachusetts, and so fresh! We filled our car trunk with the fruit anywhere we can find space to tuck them in.



We said our goodbye to the east side of the island. Hilo was a bit colder than we had wanted, and it was drizzling so we couldn't stay long at this beautiful Carlsmith Beach Park, where we were told had a nice beach to swim in.

Travelogues

We spent our last eight nights on the west side of the island, in the Waikailua and Kona-Kailua region. It felt like we were on an entirely different continent altogether. It was a total contrast to the east side where there were white sands instead of black, the water was calm and totally swimmable and kid-friendly, and pretty much sunny all the time. We were able to snorkel, but our kids were too scared of the sea urchins and pulling water, so we couldn't do it for long. We also forgot to charge our underwater camera, so we couldn't take any photos of the beautiful mustard tang, angel fish, and parrot fish my husband and I saw.

Our favorite photo of Dara, our eight-year-old, is this one of him and the parrots that he demanded to take pictures with. Afterwards, he was like, "Wow, that was the most painful thing I've done!" He was referring to the claws digging into his skin, but can anyone tell he was in any pain at all?



Our rental car overseeing the clouds underneath the Mauna Loa Visitor Center. Our car wasn't a 4-wheel drive so it was allowed to be driven to the summit which had an elevation of 13,679 feet! Mauna Loa is Earth's largest active volcano by both mass and volume!



Being a water bug, and apparently Dara admits being a larger water bug than me, I couldn't help but find another beach to swim in the day before we had to leave. I found this gem of a place, Kalo-loko-Honokohau National Park (free admission), which is an ancient archaeological site containing fish ponds inhabitants build to trap fish coming in from the ocean. This was also where we finally saw a dozen or more green sea turtles just lounging around in the water! I think it was a farewell—and come back sign!



This final photo was taken from the plane as we were descending into Honolulu to change planes to the mainland.

New to 2024: Enterprise Bank Diversity Spotlights!

Our DEIB Attraction & Recruiting Team came up with the idea of highlighting the diversity of our team members on social media at least once a month. For February, we featured **Mona Tyree to celebrate Black History Month** and for March, we highlighted **Eileen Regan to celebrate Irish-American Heritage Month!** Once they were posted on our various social media platforms, we knew that we had made the right decision, because we had so many great comments from the community! Thank you to those who have agreed to or who are volunteering to be highlighted! It's wonderful to learn about our team members this way! Please keep an eye out for team members being spotlighted the whole year!



Mona Tyree, Senior Cash Management Operations Supervisor, AVP, has been with the Bank for over 30 years. Mona is both Black American and Caucasian, and during Black History Month, she enjoys spending time with family sharing valuable stories and history and participating in Lowell's Black History Month Flag Raising and the Annual Ball. Last year, she was recognized with the Mary Scott Mitchell Community Service Award and was honored with a citation from City Hall during Black History Month for her extensive volunteer and community work.

Mona is from Lowell and the diversity in her family and the city has helped to define her and she is empathetic and understanding to those around her. She seeks to understand where people come from and treat them as equals, while recognizing there is still work that needs to be done. Mona is passionate about equity and inclusion, which leads and drives her to be involved in several community organizations, committees, boards, non-profits, and volunteer work.

One of Mona's inspirations is the late Maya Angelou. Mona said, "When I read Maya Angelou's book, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, it spoke to me in many ways. Maya overcame her fears and knew her value, which spoke volumes to me. One of her quotes that I will always keep in mind is "You Alone Are Enough. You have nothing to prove to anybody." This is something I truly live by."

Senior Regional Manager, SVP, Eileen Regan, has been a team member at Enterprise Bank for over 10 years. She is proud to be of 100% Irish descent. Her primary language is English; however, she can also speak Gaelic. Eileen usually celebrates St. Patrick's Day at the Annual Mayor's Luncheon as well as enjoying corned beef and cabbage with her family. One of her most memorable St. Patrick's Day moments was when her sisters won medals for Irish Step Dancing in Ireland.



Eileen's father and his three brothers were brought to the US from Ireland in 1949 by a Professional Boxing Agent. They settled in Massachusetts and had a deep love and appreciation for America. Eileen and her family would often go "home" to Ireland, but her father felt that it was a privilege to become a US Citizen. He never took for granted living in the US and instilled that respect in his family.

Eileen is very involved in the community, currently serving on the Board of Directors as Northern Essex Community College (NECCO) and the Greater Lawrence Revolving Loan Fund.

Her inspiration comes from the memory of her late parents. Eileen stated, "If I were half the person either of them was in terms of kindness and quality, I will consider my life a success."

Contributor/DEIB E-Zine Committee Bios



Kevin Bruckenstein is the Internal Communications Specialist for Enterprise Bank. Formerly the Head of Marketing at FinMason, a fintech startup in Boston, Kevin specializes in writing, copyediting, messaging, and communications planning and execution. He earned his bachelor's degree in advertising and his master's degree in mass communication, with a concentration in communication law, from the University of Florida. In his spare time, he enjoys traveling, reading, gaming, and hiking.

Eddie Enea has been with Enterprise Bank since March of 2022. He is the bank's Talent Acquisition Specialist. He adores his three beautiful children and says that he is terrified of how much they remind him of himself. Cooking is one of his passions, especially his Sunday dinner prep. He prefers Lake Winnepesaukee to any beach and misses the days of watching good football.



Autumn Ouellet started her career with Enterprise Bank in January 2022 as the Marketing & Social Media Co-op through the Co-op Learning Program with the University of Massachusetts – Lowell. After completing her undergraduate degree with a bachelor's in business administration and a double concentration in Marketing and Management, Autumn returned to Enterprise Bank as the Marketing & Social Media Specialist. In her spare time, she enjoys going to concerts, reading, spending time with her friends and family, and exploring new places.

Kira Morehouse has been with Enterprise Bank since 2015 specializing in Digital Marketing. Kira has a B.A. in Communication Arts with a Cognate in Interpersonal Communication and Cultural Studies, and a Global M.B.A. with specialization in Corporate Strategy. As part of her undergraduate studies, Kira spent time studying abroad in Japan for six months, with focus on Language, Literature, Culture, and Zen Buddhism. In her spare time, Kira enjoys being a mother to her two daughters, going on family adventures, volunteering within her church community, and relaxing at home watching movies with her husband.



Megan Pardoe is a Relationship Advisor at the Nashua Main Street Branch. She currently serves as co-chair of the Pride C.O.R.P.S. ERG. She enjoys writing about LGBTQIA+, history, and women-related topics. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her boyfriend, Jonathan, and playing video games.

Contributor Bios, cont'd



Roselyn Scales is the Community Relations Coordinator for Enterprise Bank assisting with the Bank's philanthropic endeavors and involvement in the communities the Bank serves. She joined Enterprise Bank in 2019 with fifteen plus years in banking including Branch Management, Branch Operations, and Mortgage Lending, as well as a combined ten years as a Development/Advancement Coordinator for St. Margaret Elementary School and Lowell Catholic in Lowell. She has a bachelor's degree in political science from Merrimack College and a certificate in Paralegal Studies from Northeastern University. She enjoys puzzles, watching sports, particularly Bruins, Celtics, and Patriots, and traveling when able.

Tenesha Scarlett is one of our newer Enterprise Bank Team Members. She started with the bank in October of 2023. Her position is DEIB Coordinator II. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in Sociology, specializing in Social Services. Her passions are spending time with her two boys Linton Jr (13) and Declan (9). She also enjoys performing with her band, Tee & The Gents. She loves her family and friends and loves to give back to the community.



Sophy Theam is the Senior Manager—Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) at Enterprise Bank. In addition to co-chairing the Multicultural Alliance, she serves as an advisor for other employee resource groups and manages the Bank's DEIB program. Sophy enjoys watching historical/period dramas and high-action and investigative shows and movies. Her favorite superhero is Aquaman and she enjoys traveling! Her resolution in 2024 is to be healthy, happy, and to fulfill a couple of dreams, including learning to sing traditional Khmer songs!



Hawaiian Honu, or Green Sea Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)

On the final day of our trip to the Big Island, we were fortunate enough to see about a dozen green sea turtles just bathing in the shallow warm water. Later, I learned that green sea turtles are the only sea turtles known to sunbathe and Hawaii is the only place in the world where green sea turtles regularly bask on shore.

In Hawaiian mythology, the Green Sea Turtle, is known as "Honu." It is revered as a guardian spirit and a **symbol of wisdom and good luck**.

We would like to pass on the **good luck** we received to all our readers!