



Together
Venture

Diversity
Equity
Inclusion

ISSUE 2

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2022



NELSON
MANDELA

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Together Venture Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is a quarterly digital news letter that celebrates and honors historical moments observed dates and events in an effort to educate, promote and strengthen diversity at Venture Community Services; Inc.

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“Our ability to reach unity in
diversity will be the beauty
and the test of our civilization”

Mahatma Gandhi

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JULY
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NELSON MANDELA

COVER STORY

Rolihlahla Mandela was born into the Madiba clan in the village of Mvezo, in the Eastern Cape, on 18 July 1918. His mother was Nonqaphi Nosekeni and his father was Nkosi Mphakanyiswa Gadla Mandela, principal counsellor to the Acting King of the Thembu people, Jongintaba Dalindyebo. In 1930, when he was 12 years old, his father died and the young Rolihlahla became a ward of Jongintaba at the Great Place in Mqhekezweni.

Hearing the elders' stories of his ancestors' valour during the wars of resistance, he dreamed also of making his own contribution to the freedom struggle of his people. He attended primary school in Qunu where his teacher, Miss Mdingane, gave him the name Nelson, in accordance with the custom of giving all schoolchildren "Christian" names.

He completed his Junior Certificate at Clarkebury Boarding Institute and went on to Healdtown, a Wesleyan secondary school of some repute, where he matriculated.

Mandela began his studies for a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University College of Fort Hare but did not complete the degree there as he was expelled for joining in a student protest.

On his return to the Great Place at Mqhekezweni the King was furious and said if he didn't return to Fort Hare he would arrange wives for him and his cousin Justice. They ran away to Johannesburg instead, arriving there in 1941. There he worked as a mine security officer and after meeting Walter Sisulu, an estate agent, he was introduced to Lazer Sidelsky. He then did his articles through a firm of attorneys – Witkin, Eidelman and Sidelsky.

He completed his BA through the University of South Africa and went back to Fort Hare for his graduation in 1943.

Meanwhile, he began studying for an LLB at the University of the Witwatersrand. By his own admission he was a poor student and left the university in 1952 without graduating. He only started studying again through the University of London after his imprisonment in 1962 but also did not complete that degree.

In 1989, while in the last months of his imprisonment, he obtained an LLB through the University of South Africa. He graduated in absentia at a ceremony in Cape Town.



Nelson Mandela on the roof of Kholvad House in 1953.
(Image: (C) Herbert SHore, Courtesy of the ahmed Kathrada Foundation.)

ENTERING POLITICS

Mandela, while increasingly politically involved from 1942, only joined the African National Congress in 1944 when he helped to form the ANC Youth League (ANCYL).

In 1944 he married Walter Sisulu's cousin, Evelyn Mase, a nurse. They had two sons, Madiba Thembekile "Thembi" and Makgatho, and two daughters both called Makaziwe, the first of whom died in infancy. He and his wife divorced in 1958.

Mandela rose through the ranks of the ANCYL and through its efforts, the ANC adopted a more radical mass-based policy, the Programme of Action, in 1949.

In 1952 he was chosen as the National Volunteer-in-Chief of the Defiance Campaign with Maulvi Cachalia as his deputy. This campaign of civil disobedience against six unjust laws was a joint programme between the ANC and the South African Indian Con-

gress. He and 19 others were charged under the Suppression of Communism Act for their part in the campaign and sentenced to nine months of hard labour, suspended for two years.

A two-year diploma in law on top of his BA allowed Mandela to practice law, and in August 1952 he and Oliver Tambo established South Africa's first black-owned law firm in the 1950s, Mandela & Tambo.²

At the end of 1952 he was banned for the first time. As a restricted person he was only permitted to watch in secret as the Freedom Charter was adopted in Kliptown on 26 June 1955.

THE TREASON TRIAL

Mandela was arrested in a countrywide police swoop on 5 December 1956, which led to the 1956 Treason Trial. Men and women of all races found themselves in the dock in the marathon trial that only ended when the last 28 accused, including Mandela, were acquitted on 29 March 1961.

On 21 March 1960 police killed 69 unarmed people in a protest in Sharpeville against the pass laws. This led to the country's first state of emergency and the banning of the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) on 8 April. Mandela and his colleagues in the Treason Trial were among thousands detained during the state of emergency.

During the trial Mandela married a social worker, Winnie Madikizela, on 14 June 1958. They had two daughters, Zenani and Zindziswa. The couple divorced in 1996.

Days before the end of the Treason Trial, Mandela travelled to Pietermaritzburg to speak at the All-in Africa Conference, which resolved that he should write to Prime Minister Verwoerd requesting a national convention on a non-racial constitution, and to warn that should he not agree there would be a national strike against South Africa becoming a republic. After he and his colleagues were acquitted in the Treason Trial, Mandela went underground and began planning a national strike for 29, 30 and 31 March.

In the face of massive mobilisation of state security the strike was called off early. In June 1961 he was asked to lead the armed struggle and helped to establish Umkhonto weSizwe (Spear of the Nation), which launched on 16 December 1961 with a series of explosions.

On 11 January 1962, using the adopted name David Mot-samayi, Mandela secretly left South Africa. He travelled

around Africa and visited England to gain support for the armed struggle. He received military training in Morocco and Ethiopia and returned to South Africa in July 1962. He was arrested in a police roadblock outside Howick on 5 August while returning from KwaZulu-Natal, where he had briefed ANC President Chief Albert Luthuli about his trip.

He was charged with leaving the country without a permit and inciting workers to strike. He was convicted and sentenced to five years' imprisonment, which he began serving at the Pretoria Local Prison. On 27 May 1963 he was transferred to Robben Island and returned to Pretoria on 12 June. Within a month police raided Liliesleaf, a secret hideout in Rivonia, Johannesburg, used by ANC and Communist Party activists, and several of his comrades were arrested.

On 9 October 1963 Mandela joined 10 others on trial for sabotage in what became known as the Rivonia Trial. While facing the death penalty his words to the court at the end of his famous "Speech from the Dock" on 20 April 1964 became immortalised:

On 11 June 1964 Mandela and seven other ac-

I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die. "

Speech from the Dock quote by Nelson Mandela on 20 April 1964

cused, Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Denis Goldberg, Elias Motsoaledi and Andrew Mlangeni, were convicted and the next day were sentenced to life imprisonment. Goldberg was sent to Pretoria Prison because he was white, while the others went to Robben Island.

Mandela's mother died in 1968 and his eldest son, Thembi, in 1969. He was not allowed to attend their funerals.

On 31 March 1982 Mandela was transferred to Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town with Sisulu, Mhlaba and Mlangeni. Kathrada joined them in October. When he returned to the prison in November 1985 after prostate surgery, Mandela was held alone. Justice Minister Kobie Coetsee visited him in hospital. Later Mandela initiated talks about an ultimate meeting between the apartheid government and the ANC.

RELEASE FROM PRISON

On 12 August 1988 he was taken to hospital where he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. After more than three months in two hospitals he was transferred on 7 December 1988 to a house at Victor Verster Prison near Paarl where he spent his last 14 months of imprisonment. He was released from its gates on Sunday 11 February 1990, nine days after the unbanning of the ANC and the PAC and nearly four months after the release of his remaining Rivonia comrades. Throughout his imprisonment he had rejected at least three conditional offers of release.

Mandela immersed himself in official talks to end white minority rule and in 1991 was elected ANC President to replace his ailing friend, Oliver Tambo. In 1993 he and President FW de Klerk jointly won the Nobel Peace Prize and on 27 April 1994 he voted for the first time in his life.

PRESIDENT

On 10 May 1994 he was inaugurated as South Africa's first democratically elected President. On his 80th birthday in 1998 he married Graça Machel, his third wife.

True to his promise, Mandela stepped down in 1999 after one term as President. He continued to work with the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund he set up in 1995 and established the Nelson Mandela Foundation and The Mandela Rhodes Foundation.

"It is in your hands" – Mandela Day quote

In April 2007 his grandson, Mandla Mandela, was installed as head of the Mvezo Traditional Council at a ceremony at the Mvezo Great Place.

Nelson Mandela never wavered in his devotion to democracy, equality and learning. Despite terrible provocation, he never answered racism with racism. His life is an inspiration to all who are oppressed and deprived; and to all who are opposed to oppression and deprivation.

He died at his home in Johannesburg on December 5 2013.

Nelson Mandela Foundation: <https://www.nelsonmandela.org/content/page/biography>

JULY 26

NATIONAL DISABILITY INDEPENDENCE DAY

National Disability Independence Day—a day set aside to commemorate the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Enacted in 1990, this comprehensive civil rights law prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities, assuring them full community participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency. Wide in scope, the ADA grants protections in areas of public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications.

The ADA's provisions have helped to transform American society, further advancing independence, inclusion, and equality of opportunity for millions of Americans with disabilities. According to the ADA National Network, "Today, 1 in 4 Americans with disabilities are able to participate in their communities and workplaces thanks to the ADA."

<https://ibvi.org/blog/what-is-national-disability-independence-day/>



JULY 30

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FRIENDSHIP

The day is said to have started in the United States in 1935, however, it goes back to 1919. Joyce Hall, the inventor of Hallmark cards, created the day in 1930, with August 2 as the original date. The greeting card National Association had supported the day, but it was abandoned after it became a commercial ploy to market greeting cards. Dr Ramon Artemio Bracho introduced the concept of creating a World Friendship Day on July 20, 1958.

After the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed it so on April 27, 2011, July 30 became officially recognized as International Friendship Day. This day is significant because it recognizes the powerful tie of friendship that exists between two or more individuals regardless of caste, creed, or color. It is a day that ignites enthusiasm for a better world in which everyone works together for the greater good, and it is a day that brings together individuals who are working for a better world in which everyone works together for the greater good.

<https://www.news18.com/news/lifestyle/international-day-of-friendship-2021-date-history-and-significance-4022864.html>

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INTERNATIONAL NONBINARY PEOPLE'S DAY**NON-BINARY DEFINED**

Most people – including most transgender people – are either male or female. But some people don't neatly fit into the categories of "man" or "woman," or "male" or "female." For example, some people have a gender that blends elements of being a man or a woman, or a gender that is different than either male or female. Some people don't identify with any gender. Some people's gender changes over time.

People whose gender is not male or female use many different terms to describe themselves, with non-binary being one of the most common. Other terms include gender-queer, agender, bigender, and more. None of these terms mean exactly the same thing – but all speak to an experience of gender that is not simply male or female.

(Note: NCTE uses both the adjectives "male" and "female" and the nouns "man" and "woman" to refer to a person's gender identity.)

WHY "NON-BINARY"?

Some societies – like ours – tend to recognize just two genders, male and female. The idea that there are only two genders is sometimes called a "gender binary," because binary means "having two parts" (male and female). Therefore, "non-binary" is one term people use to describe genders that don't fall into one of these two categories, male or female.

**BASIC FACTS ABOUT NON-BINARY PEOPLE**

Non-binary people are nothing new. Non-binary people aren't confused about their gender identity or following a new fad – non-binary identities have been recognized for millennia by cultures and societies around the world.

Some, but not all, non-binary people undergo medical procedures to make their bodies more congruent with their gender identity. While not all non-binary people need medical care to live a fulfilling life, it's critical and even life-saving for many.

Most transgender people are not non-binary. While some transgender people are non-binary, most transgender people have a gender identity that is either male or female, and should be treated like any other man or woman.

Being non-binary is not the same thing as being intersex. Intersex people have anatomy or genes that don't fit typical definitions of male and female. Most intersex people identify as either men or women. Non-binary people are usually not intersex: they're usually born with bodies that may fit typical definitions of male and female, but their innate gender identity is something other than male or female.

HOW TO BE RESPECTFUL AND SUPPORTIVE OF NON-BINARY PEOPLE

It isn't as hard as you might think to be supportive and respectful of non-binary people, even if you have just started to learn about them.

You don't have to understand what it means for someone to be non-binary to respect them. Some people haven't heard a lot about non-binary genders or have trouble understanding them, and that's okay.

But identities that some people don't understand still deserve respect.

Use the name a person asks you to use. This is one of the most critical aspects of being respectful of a non-binary person, as the name you may have been using may not reflect their gender identity. Don't ask someone what their old name was.

Try not to make any assumptions about people's gender. You can't tell if someone is non-binary simply by looking at them, just like how you can't tell if someone is transgender just by how they look.

If you're not sure what pronouns someone uses, ask. Different non-binary people may use different pronouns. Many non-binary people use "they" while others use "he" or "she," and still others use other pronouns. Asking whether someone should be referred to as "he," "she," "they," or another pronoun may feel awkward at first, but is one of the simplest and most important ways to show respect for someone's identity.

Advocate for non-binary friendly policies. It's important for non-binary people to be able to live, dress and have their gender respected at work, at school and in public spaces.

Understand that, for many non-binary people, figuring out which bathroom to use can be challenging. For many non-binary people, using either the women's or the men's room might feel unsafe, because others may verbally harass them or even physically attack them. Non-binary people should be supported by being able to use the restroom that they believe they will be safest in.

Talk to non-binary people to learn more about who they are. There's no one way to be non-binary. The best way to understand what it's like to be non-binary is to talk with non-binary people and listen to their stories.

<https://transequality.org/issues/resources/understanding-non-binary-people-how-to-be-respectful-and-supportive>



Annmarie, her team, and the individuals worked together to create a portrait to embrace & honor their diversity.

“Although times have changed, this community of people has grown to teach us to be creative, more open, show compassion, understanding, patience, love, and most importantly how not to set limits for individuals or for ourselves. They teach us that being different is nothing to be ashamed of, but as something we all can learn from each other.”

Annmarie Addesa-Adegoke



AUGUST

NATIONAL CIVILITY MONTH

The Latin root of civility originated in 509 B.C. with the Romans. Their social and political structure became more decentralized, and democracy took root in the then-powerhouses, Ancient Rome and Ancient Greece. As people began to demand and receive more rights, they started devising words to describe their new republic. The term first meant 'civis' or 'citizen,' which referred to men with property. Over time, the word evolved to 'civitas,' a.k.a. the "rights and duties of citizenship," and then to 'civilitas,' for the "art and science of citizenship."

The current English word is derived from a French root — 'civilité' — but the meaning has changed again. It wasn't about the republic and citizens' rights anymore, it was now used mainly in the French courts to talk about proper behavior, dress, speech, service between the French lords and those who served them. The complete understanding and evolution of civility came during a major period of enlightenment spanning almost 300 years.

The Renaissance, the Age of Science, and the Age of Enlightenment broadened people's definition of the term, and civility now meant the sense of being human and acting with humanity. Educated and civilized people were expected to exhibit traits of civility, like polished manners, a love and sensitivity towards beauty, respect for absolutely everyone, and a solid adherence to honor and duty. Historians conclude that our understanding of this word inspired many events, including presidential and parliamentary democracy and the women's empowerment movements.

Today's meaning of civility is etched in every person's mind and is a common thread that unites our behavior. As we're gaining a new understanding of ourselves and the environment around us, we are reaching out to people, sharing our love and care, and being civil to one another. And still have a long way to go to become a world mostly free of incivility, which is what National Civility Day addresses.

<https://nationaltoday.com/national-civility-month/#:~:text=People%20being%20civil%20to%20other,kindness%2C%20empathy%2C%20and%20respect.>

JOIN TOGETHER VENTURE

If you want to participate in an energetic, game changing team and make a difference in Venture's workforce culture, then you are an ideal candidate to join Together Venture!. If interested please email us at; together@venturecs.org





International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

The International Day of the World's Indigenous People on August 9 pays tribute to the indigenous communities of the world. The latest data reveals that there are about 370 to 500 million indigenous people living in 90 countries. These communities are noted to have their own unique set of languages, traditions, cultures, and governing systems. For many indigenous groups, the systems that their ancestors have followed for centuries have stood the test of time by serving them with positive outcomes to date. Many indigenous people's special bond and connection with nature have also led to the protection of the general environment. However, on the other side, several indigenous communities face difficulties due to a central government's covert and overt attempts to control their lives. This has led to indigenous people's rights violations where they would have otherwise ensured peaceful and harmonious lives for them.

<https://nationaltoday.com/international-day-of-the-worlds-indigenous-people/>

AUGUST 9

AUGUST 17

MARCUS GARVEY DAY IN JAMAICA

On August 17, Jamaicans celebrate Marcus Garvey Day. It honors a Jamaican-born political activist, orator, publisher, journalist and entrepreneur who fought for the rights of Afro-Jamaicans.

Marcus Garvey was born on August 17, 1887 in Saint Ann's Bay to a stonemason and a domestic servant. He was a descendant of African slaves (the Irish last name Garvey had been inherited by his ancestors from their former owners), meaning he was at the lowest level of the Jamaican social hierarchy. Garvey attended a local church school until the age of 14 and then had to work since his parents couldn't afford to pay for his further education.

In 1905, Garvey moved to Kingston in search for a better job. Soon, he joined the trade union movement and took a leading role in the 1908 print workers' strike. When the strike was broken, Garvey was fired and struggled to find a new job, having been branded a troublemaker. As a result, he became increasingly angry at the inequalities present in Jamaican society and joined the National Club, the first nationalist organization in Jamaica.

Economical challenges made Garvey leave Jamaica. During the next four years, he traveled through Central America, spent some time in London, and undertook a trip across Europe. Upon his return to Jamaica in 1914, Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL), a Pan-African nationalist organization.

The ideology of UNIA-ACL was nicknamed Garveyism after the organization's founder. It centered on the unification and empowerment of African-Americans, the fight against their discrimination and marginalization, and eventual repatriation of black Americans descended from slaves to the African continent.

In 1929, Garvey founded the first modern political party in Jamaica, the People's Political Party. Six years later, he relocated to London but remain active and worked until his death from stroke in 1940. In 1964, his body was taken to Jamaica and reburied in National Heroes Park in Kingston.

Marcus Garvey is considered the first national hero of Jamaica. In 2012, the government of Jamaica created Marcus Garvey Day in honor of his 125th birth anniversary. This memorial day is marked with a wreath-laying ceremony in National Heroes Park, patriotic lessons in schools, concerts, and other events and activities.

AUGUST 23

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE REMEMBRANCE

International Day for the Remembrance is celebrated on from the night of August 22 to 23 August 1791, in Santo Domingo (today Haiti and the Dominican Republic) saw the beginning of the uprising that would play a crucial role in the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.

It is against this background that the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition is commemorated on 23 August each year.

This International Day is intended to inscribe the tragedy of the slave trade in the memory of all peoples. In accordance with the goals of the intercultural project, "The Slave Route", it should offer an opportunity for collective consideration of the historic causes, the methods and the consequences of this tragedy, and for an analysis of the interactions to which it has given rise between Africa, Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean.

<https://www.unesco.org/en/days/slave-trade-remembrance-day>

WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY

Women's Equality Day, celebrated every August 26, commemorates the passage of women's suffrage in the U.S. and reminds us of the hurdles overcome by the heroic women who faced violence and discrimination to propel the women's movement forward.

AUGUST 26

In the early 19th century, American women, who generally couldn't inherit property and made half of a man's wages in any available jobs, began organizing to demand political rights and representation.

By the early 1900s, several countries including Finland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom had legalized voting for women as the movement continued to sweep across the world. In the U.S., the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was first introduced in 1878, but it failed to gain traction. It wasn't until women's involvement in the World War I effort made their contributions painfully obvious that women's suffrage finally gained enough support. Women's rights groups pointed out the hypocrisy of fighting for democracy in Europe while denying it to half of the American citizens at home.

Because a Constitutional amendment requires approval from two-thirds of the states, 36 of them had to ratify the 19th Amendment before its passage. The deciding vote in the Tennessee legislature came from Harry T. Burn, a young state representative whose mother's plea to support the amendment became a deciding factor in his vote (which he switched at the last minute).

Women aren't done fighting for equal rights. Today, the wage gap between men and women still impacts women's economic power, and gender-based discrimination still plagues workplaces and business transactions.

To remind us of the struggles of the past, present, and future, Congress designated August 26 as Women's Equality Day in 1971.

<https://nationaltoday.com/womens-equality-day/>



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CHRISTA TUFT
Director of Residential Services

What advice would you offer to younger girls starting out in the work world?

My advice to younger girls starting out in the work world would be to think of where their strengths are and what they truly enjoy, then build a career around that. Often, young women feel pressure to enter careers that others think would be good for them. I would also advise them to find their voice and not be afraid to use it. Sometimes the quietest person in the room has the most influence. Your voice is more than verbal conversation. Stay true to yourself and your work will reflect that.

Who is your role model?

I don't have one role model. Ruth Bader Ginsberg and Hillary Clinton both impressed me when I was young. There was something different about Hillary Clinton as First Lady. She was unapologetic in her fight for what she believed in. It wasn't something I was used to seeing in a woman. These two women used their voices in different ways, both equally as effective.

What makes you feel empowered as a woman?

Learning to say no makes me feel empowered. Even as a people pleaser, saying no to something you don't want to do is empowering and liberating. It gets easier with age and experience. Also, education is empowering. There is a confidence and experience that comes with more advanced education. Continuing education can happen at any age and is one of the most empowering tools we have as women.

What is your biggest challenge as a working woman and how do you overcome it?

My biggest challenge as a working woman is work/life balance. As women, we tend to take on much of the responsibility in our families. This was especially challenging when I was a young mother working my way through college. It's important to remember that our timeline is our own. I started graduate school in 1996 and went back in 2014 to finish the last few classes for my Master's in education. It's never too late to make a change or finish something later in life.

WILMA VARFLEY
Resident House Manager

What advice would you offer to younger girls starting out in the work world?

Nothing is too small to learn, whether its adapting to a variety of people or starting from the bottom, everything is a lesson for future endeavors.

Who is your role model?

My mom! She has always said, "when you don't hear, you will feel" and I never knew what that meant until I got older; If you spend more time listening, you will have all that there is to offer, if not you will spend each moment dealing with the consequences.

What makes you feel empowered as a woman?

As a young woman, I promised myself to never do or say anything outside of who I am and who I want to be. My strength is beyond measures, I believe it and stand in it.

What is your biggest challenge as a working woman and how do you overcome it?

I see challenges as stepping stones, I've learned that no matter what obstacles come my way there's always a way to get over it, I just think "what is this trying to teach me?"

BEVERLY LIDONDE
Residential House Manager

What advice would you offer to younger girls starting out in the work world?

My advice to younger women starting in the work world is to always respectfully speak your mind, have patience, and listen to understand, not just respond. Not everyone has the same opinions or perspective and that's ok - as long as you're true to yourself and patiently listen to understand, you will learn more than you thought and will go far in the work world.

Who is your role model?

My role model is my mother. I have seen her raise 5 children on her own while still going after her own dreams. She has taught me how to be resilient, brave and kind while still being humble enough to learn from all types of people in life.

What makes you feel empowered as a woman?

I understand my value at home, work, in the world as a whole and know what I deserve out of this life. I think I have a healthy confidence that exudes when I have conversations with people. I understand everyone comes from all walks of life and each person you meet has a story to tell. I just happen to make people comfortable enough to share their stories and feel like somebody actually understands where they are coming from. As a woman, I feel like making someone feel comfortable is priceless than anything else because at the end of the day everyone just wants to be heard and have someone to talk to.

What is your biggest challenge as a working woman and how do you overcome it?

I think my biggest challenge as a woman is balancing work life and home life. Home life is a second job for most women and it gets tiring.

ENGLE TORRES

Shared Living & Individual Supports Coordinator

What advice would you offer to younger girls starting out in the work world?

As a young woman myself, I can look back not too long ago and advise younger women to take risks and put yourself out there. It's important to make yourself seen in a positive light. Apply for that job, take on that project or join that committee. It's ok not to have the solution to every problem, ask as many questions and attain genuine relationships with more experienced women in your field.

Who is your role model?

My mother is one of my biggest role models. My mother had a 7th grade education and moved to Massachusetts from Puerto Rico at the age of 25 with 2 young children. She had no other family for support, no driver's license and did not speak English. I remember taking the city bus with my mom to QCC so she could attend ESL classes. My mother put in the work to give us opportunities that she did not have. My mother is strong, resourceful and loving. She has encountered many obstacles but made sure that my brother and I never felt it as children. She raised two college educated children that have careers helping people and love what they do.

What makes you feel empowered as a woman?

Being independent makes me feel empowered as a woman. I would consider myself independent in my personal life and in my work life. Also, being around other women makes me feel empowered. Women in leadership, other mothers, creative women, and women with skills that I do not have. Venture does a great job recognizing women, their efforts and accomplishments.

What is your biggest challenge as a working woman and how do you overcome?

Particularly, as a young woman of color, I just want to be seen for my skillset and my work. It's very easy to believe your own negative thoughts about yourself and that people judge you in that way. I overcome this by strengthening my relationships with other women - whether it's my supervisor, my mom, or my best friend to remind myself what I bring to the table.



KERRIE MASON

Vice President of Marketing

What advice would you offer to younger girls starting out in the work world?

Know when to assert yourself and express your opinions, and know when to just listen to other points of view. When you are expressing your opinions, try to present them in a way that doesn't put others down. If you mess up, take ownership, learn from it, and move on. Also, don't take yourself too seriously - you can usually find humor and the silver lining in just about any situation.

Who is your role model?

My grandmother. She was a first-generation Albanian immigrant who grew up in Boston in a large family that she helped daily. When she married and left home, she went

on to raise her own family all while holding a full-time job at a factory. She was consistently available for anyone when needed, hosted every holiday and was happy to do so. She took the time to give back to her community and nobody ever had a harsh word to say about her. She was also always happy and thankful with what she had and wasn't searching or wanting for more.

What makes you feel empowered as a woman?

My strength. When I was younger, it wasn't 'cool' to be strong and a woman, now I just embrace it. Also, my ability to multi-task. I feel empowered when completing a project that had a lot of moving parts and details that I was able to coordinate successfully while also being present and supportive to my family.

What is your biggest challenge as a working woman and how do you overcome?

Sometimes it is a challenge to be in all of the places where you are needed. Unfortunately, you can't fully overcome this, it is just a matter of your work-life balance and setting what is a priority at the time.

PAIGE MADOR

Director of Community Engagement

What advice would you offer to younger girls starting out in the work world?

Share your opinion, but in a calm, professional way. Don't allow emotional reactions to cloud your message. It could potentially take away from a valuable suggestion or critique.

Who is your role model?

My mother. She has many excellent qualities, but the one that stands out to me is how she advocates for her children. Growing up, she stood up for us and believed in us. It's important for children to feel heard and seen in a way that holds them accountable but is also supportive. My mother grew up on a farm and was the first person in her family to go to college. She also finished her Masters' degree while raising young children.

What makes you feel empowered as a woman?

Surrounding myself with like-minded individuals, especially other women, makes me feel empowered. Choosing wisely who you spend your time, energy, and emotions on can make a huge impact on your self-esteem. What is your biggest challenge as a working woman and how do you overcome?

Child care is a big challenge, especially when my kids are sick. I've learned to unapologetically advocate for their best interests and accept help from your support system when it's available.

LAURIE REYNOLDS

Associate Vice President for Operations

What advice would you offer to younger girls starting out in the work world?

The advice I would offer younger girls starting out in the work world is to have confidence in themselves, learn to have difficult conversations, and respectfully stand up for yourself. Always be respectful and listen to what others have to say - you can learn so much by just listening! Never stop learning. Don't let others take your power away to mold you into someone they want you to be.

Who is your role model?

I have several role models and I try to learn something from all of them. One is my parents. I think they are amazing people, taking in foster children for several years, always providing for the family even when times were really tough. They were always supportive and encouraged you to always be your best. They taught me compassion, generosity, and to always try to find out about people. You'll feel more connected to others when you know where they've come from and what they've been through.

What makes you feel empowered as a woman?

I think the older I become, the more empowered I feel. With age you gain more confidence, knowledge, and sort of come into the you that you want to be. Nowadays it's acceptable to be an empowered woman.

What is your biggest challenge as a working woman and how do you overcome?

The biggest challenge is finding a work-life balance. Although, now I feel like I'm at a point in my life where I have that. My kids are grown and on their own. Back in the day, the struggle was working full time, trying to raise my family, and attending college. But I did it!

PAMELA SAMPSON
Chief Program Officer

What advice would you offer to younger girls starting out in the work world?

Learn how to have hard conversations. It is essential to being an effective leader. Sometimes you have to tell people things they don't necessarily want to hear and the more comfortable you are with doing that, the better off you are.

Learn that it's business. When you receive constructive feedback in the workplace, the feedback isn't about your character. It's about your performance. Everyone has things they can work on and everyone makes mistakes. Getting critical feedback doesn't mean that you're a bad employee. It means that you have to work on that one specific thing to improve your performance.

Don't let anyone dull your shine. If you're smart and ambitious, own it. Own your imperfections and be proud of your quirks. Those who know me, know that I am a quirky person and totally comfortable with all the ways I am different from other people.

Who is your role model?

My role model was my mother. She was an incredibly strong woman who faced a huge amount of adversity in her life. Despite it all, she kept going. She was always up for a challenge and loved a good adventure. She was unapologetic for stating her opinions and loved a good debate. Mostly, she was fiercely loyal to her family and her tribe of friends. If I were to pick more of a well-known role model, it would be Ruth Bader Ginsburg. She was small, but mighty and used her brains and her courage to change American society to improve the lives of women.

What makes you feel empowered as a woman?

As a young woman, I chose a pretty hard road for myself. I became a single mom in my late 20's and struggled for many years to balance raising my son and having a career. When I look around now, I can proudly say that I have raised an impressive young man who I am ridiculously proud of. I have a great job and coworkers that are terrific. I have a really wonderful circle of family and friends who really enhance my life and have been a great support. I feel empowered because that's what I built for myself.

What is your biggest challenge as a working woman and how do you overcome?

Even in a woman-dominated industry like Human Services, the old boy network still exists. A majority of senior leaders in our industry are men. We overcome by helping other women to feel confident enough to apply for senior positions and help them succeed in their senior position.



SEPTEMBER

Hispanic Heritage Month

The Heritage Month takes place on September 15 to October 15 every year as a time to recognize and celebrate the many contributions, diverse cultures, and extensive histories of the American Latino community. Beginning in 1968, Hispanic Heritage Month was originally observed as “Hispanic Heritage Week” under President Lyndon Johnson, but it was later extended to a month during President Ronald Reagan’s term in 1988.


Since then, the month has been celebrated nationwide through festivals, art shows, conferences, community gatherings, and much more. The month also celebrates the independence days of several Latin American countries, including: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua on September 15th, Mexico on September 16th, and Chile on September 18th. They also include holidays that recognize Hispanic contributions such as Virgin Islands-Puerto Rico Friendship Day that is celebrated in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

On September 14, 2021, President Biden issued a presidential proclamation on National Hispanic Heritage Month (Spanish):

“During National Hispanic Heritage Month, we recognize that Hispanic heritage is American heritage. We see it in every aspect of our national life: on our television and movie screens, in the music that moves our feet, and in the foods we enjoy. We benefit from the many contributions of Hispanic scientists working in labs across the country to help us fight COVID-19 and the doctors and the nurses on the front lines caring for people’s health. Our Nation is represented by Hispanic diplomats who share our values in countries all over the world and strengthened by military members and their families who serve and sacrifice for the United States. Our communities are represented by Hispanic elected officials, and our children are taught by Hispanic teachers. Our future will be shaped by Hispanic engineers who are working to develop new technology that will help us grasp our clean energy future and by the skilled union workers who are going to build it.”

Latino educators, scientists, artists, and other professionals help make our communities more resilient & equitable. In a video to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, Secretary Cardona emphasizes that Latino voices, dreams & successes matter now more than ever.

<https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/national-hi>



**NATIONAL
HISPANIC
HERITAGE MONTH**

September 15 to October 15

National Guide Dog Month

National Guide Dog is held in September every year. It is a month-long celebration set apart to honor the work of guide dogs and raise awareness, appreciation, and support for guide dog schools across the U.S. Guide dogs go through rigorous training from an early age. They help those with sensory issues such as blindness and provide added mobility and independence for those who might not have otherwise had such freedoms. In the month of September, a drive is held to collect funds that go towards funding non-profit guide dog organizations accredited by the International Guide Dog Federation.

HISTORY OF NATIONAL GUIDE DOG MONTH

Dogs have been domesticated for around 150,000 years and have been coexisting with humans since back then. Ancient artifacts and scrolls show instances where dogs were guiding their human companions. The first attempt to train guide dogs was in Paris at the 'Les Quinze-Vingts' hospital for the blind. The founder of the Institute for the Education of the Blind 'Blinden-Erziehungs-Institut' in Vienna, Johann Wilhelm Klein, wrote about guide dogs in his book published in 1819. This provides evidence that dogs have been helping humans for a long period.

After the First World War, when many soldiers came back blind, the use of guide dogs peaked. The demand for this service prompted the opening of the first school for guide dogs in Oldenburg, Germany. Dog trainer Dorothy Harrison Eustis is attributed with bringing the first guide dog to America, and Eustis later established the 'Seeing Eye School' in Morristown, New Jersey.

Dick Van Patten was the inspiration behind National Guide Dog Month. He admired the ability of these dogs to improve the standards of life for those living with blindness but he was also aware of the time, energy, and cost that went into training these dogs. He decided to take action and raise awareness and monetary support for guide dog schools. Van Patten owned a pet food company that underwrote all costs for the promotion of National Guide Dog Month. The first guide dog fundraiser was in Southern California with the support of the Petco Foundation. Thanks to Van Patten's effort, many guide dog organizations have now become beneficiaries of these month-long events.

<https://nationaltoday.com/national-guide-dog-month/>



Suicide Prevention Month

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people ages 10 – 24. It is also one of the leading causes of PREVENTABLE death. We lose approximately 130 young people in this age group to suicide each week. FOUR out FIVE teens who attempt suicide have given clear warning signs. That means in 80% of these cases, we have an opportunity to intervene and possibly save a young person who is at-risk.

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. National Suicide Prevention Week is September 5-11, 2021, with World Suicide Prevention Day on the 10th. Throughout the month, and especially during the week of September 5, individuals and organizations around the country have plans to highlight the problem of suicide and advocate its prevention.

Anyone, regardless of age, can participate in Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Individuals, schools, offices, churches, and all types of organizations can conduct activities to bring awareness to suicide prevention. The awareness generated in September has the potential to have an enormous impact in our nation, even the chance to save a life. The Jason Foundation would like for you to consider being a part of this important week by helping create awareness.

Thank you for taking the time to review this information. At The Jason Foundation, we believe that awareness and education are the keys to prevention. There are several activities in which individuals of all ages can participate. At The Jason Foundation, we focus on the three main areas of influence on a young person's life: parents, educators/youth workers, and youth themselves. The combination of these three groups creates our Triangle of Prevention model.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss how you can further help fight the “silent epidemic” of youth suicide, visit our website at www.jasonfoundation.com.

To obtain materials for distribution, visit www.jasonfoundationmaterials.com.

<https://jasonfoundation.com/get-involved/suicide-prevention-month/>



It's Okay to Talk About **SUICIDE**

Thoughts of giving up and suicide can be frightening. Not taking these kinds of thoughts seriously can have devastating outcomes.

Suicide is **NOT** the answer.

2nd Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for people ages 10-34



The overall suicide rate has increased 35% since 1999



Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S.

46% of people who die by suicide have a diagnosed mental health condition

90% of people who die by suicide have experienced symptoms of a mental health condition

If you start thinking about suicide, seek help. Call or text a crisis line or a trusted friend.



Make an appointment with a health care professional to talk about what you're thinking or how you're feeling.



HIGH RISK POPULATIONS

78% of all people who die by suicide are male



4x Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide than straight youth

Transgender people are 12 times more likely to attempt suicide than the general population

12x

Suicidal thoughts are a symptom, just like any other — they can be treated, and they can improve over time.



If you are concerned about suicide and don't know what to do, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.


Data from CDC, NIMH and other select sources. Find citations for this resource at nami.org/mhstats

 NAMI HelpLine
800-950-NAMI (6264)

 NAMI

 NAMICommunicate

 NAMICommunicate

 www.nami.org

 **nami**
National Alliance on Mental Illness



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SEPTEMBER

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NATIVE AMERICAN DAY

Native American Day, observed annually on the second Monday in October, celebrates the cultures and contributions of the many Native American tribes. The observance is also known as Indigenous Peoples' Day.

While it is not celebrated in all 50 states, it is recognized in both California and South Dakota and gaining popularity in the rest of the nation. In other parts of the country, Indigenous Peoples' Day celebrations occur on this day. Events such as traditional dances, art displays and ceremonies have begun to replace Columbus Day practices.

The observance focuses on celebrating the culture, heritage, and history of tribes across the nation. Each diverse nation carries its own traditions, rituals, and beliefs. The day celebrates their knowledge, contributions and enriching heritage. It's also a reminder of their enduring legacy of strength, energy, and fortitude.

HOW TO OBSERVE #NativeAmericanDay

Learn about Native American cultures. Attend events near you. Visit art museums or read books by Native American authors. Learn about Native American history. Explore the language and efforts to bring lost language back. Use #NativeAmericanDay to post on social media.

NATIVE AMERICAN DAY HISTORY

The South Dakota legislature unanimously passed legislation proposed by Governor George S. Mickelson in 1989 to proclaim 1990 as the "Year of Reconciliation" between Native Americans and whites and to change Columbus Day to Native American Day.

In 2021, President Joseph Biden issued the first presidential proclamation for National Indigenous Peoples' Day.

SEPTEMBER
23



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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEMOCRACY

International Day of Democracy on September 15 allows us the opportunity to celebrate and appreciate our democratic society. It's very easy for people who live in a free society to take their freedoms for granted. Yet, when freedom is absent, life includes unimaginable challenges that are often incomprehensible. Today, let's reflect on the history of democracy around the world, thank those who influenced the development of our government, and look for opportunities to promote and protect our own nation's democracy.

HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEMOCRACY

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly passed a resolution in 2007 that September 15 of each year would be observed as the International Day of Democracy. Their goal for this day is to promote government's role in maintaining open democracy among all member nations of the UN Charter and to celebrate the system of values democracy promotes, giving citizens the power to make decisions regarding all aspects of their lives.

In their efforts to advocate for democratic societies around the world, the UN serves a variety of purposes including monitoring elections, working to strengthen democratic institutions and accountability, and assisting nations recovering from conflict to create their own constitution.

From democracy's birth in ancient Greece thousands of years ago to today, the foundation of a democratic society is the ability of its people to participate in the decision-making process of their nation. This can only happen when everyone is allowed to vote regardless of race, gender or other factors meaning inclusion and equality are also important to the success of a democratic society. In America, we have a representative democracy meaning we elect officials to represent our collective voice to vote on decisions.

As you reflect on your own freedoms and consider the country's current state of democracy, take inventory of how many ways you participate in the collective-decision making of our country, and support the ideals of democracy.

<https://nationaltoday.com/international-day-of-democracy/>

SEPTEMBER

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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

The International Day of Peace (or World Peace Day) celebrated annually on September 21 is devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples. At a time when war and violence often monopolize our news cycles, the International Day of Peace is an inspiring reminder of what we can create together. Peace. Let's give it a chance!

WHEN IS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE 2022?

International Day of Peace is celebrated around the world on September 21.

HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

In 1981, the United Nations General Assembly declared the third Tuesday of September as International Day of Peace. This day coincided with the opening day of the annual sessions of the General Assembly. The purpose of the day was and still remains, to strengthen the ideals of peace around the world.

Two decades after establishing this day of observance, in 2001, the assembly moved the date to be observed annually on September 21. So, beginning in 2002, September 21 marks not only a time to discuss how to promote and maintain peace among all peoples but also a 24-hour period of global ceasefire and non-violence for groups in active combat.

Peace is possible. Throughout history, most societies have lived in peace most of the time. Today, we are much less likely to die in war than our parents or grandparents. Since the establishment of the United Nations and the creation of the Charter of the United Nations, governments are obligated not to use force against others unless they are acting in self-defense or have been authorized by the UN Security Council to proceed.

Life is better in a world where peace exists and, today, we look to those who have been peacemakers and peacekeepers to learn what we can each do individually to make the world a more peaceful place.

<https://nationaltoday.com/international-day-of-peace/>



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