



NCR Diversity and Inclusion Newsletter #11 December 2020

This is the time of the year for holiday celebrations. We can celebrate diversity and inclusiveness by taking time to build an understanding and awareness of the traditions and beliefs of others. We need to realize that members celebrate a variety of holidays during this time of year, and some people choose to celebrate none. Be respectful of these differences by taking an interest in other people's traditions and making them feel welcome. Don't be afraid to ask people what holidays they celebrate. Ask members what they do during this time of the year that is special? This would be an opportunity to learn about different cultures and religions and traditions that accompany them.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Why is it appropriate to say, "Happy Holidays?" Here are just some of the holidays we celebrate in December.

Christmas, which means "Feast day of Christ", is a Christian holiday that celebrates the birth of Jesus, whom Christians believe is the Son of God, and a cultural holiday for non-Christians. The day known as Christmas Day is observed on the 25th day of December. It is celebrated by the gathering of family, attending church, exchanging gifts, and enjoying traditional food.

Boxing Day takes place on December 26. The holiday originated in the United Kingdom during the Middle Ages. It was the day when the alms box, collection boxes for the poor often kept in churches, are opened and distributed.

Hanukkah is a Jewish holiday which celebrates the victory of the Maccabees over the larger Syrian army. Also known as the Festival of Lights, Hanukkah begins on day 25 of the Kislev in the Hebrew calendar. Celebrations revolve around the lighting of the menorah, making traditional foods, playing with dreidels, and exchanging gifts.

Kwanzaa, which means first fruits in Swahili, was created by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966. Each family celebrates in its own way, but celebrations often include songs and dances, African drums, storytelling, poetry reading, and a large traditional meal. An African feast, called a Karamu, is held on December 31.

Pancha Ganapati is a festival created in 1985 by Satguru Sivaya Subramuniaswami, as a celebration to offer Hindu families a way to participate in the holiday season without compromising their Hindu values. It runs from December 21st to 25th, honoring Lord Ganesh, patron of Arts and Guardian of Culture. Family members work together in forgiveness and good spirit, and bring Lord Ganesh's blessings of joy and harmony. Each day a tray of sweets, fruits and incense is prepared and offered to Lord Ganapati.

Yule is celebrated by Wiccans, but people around the world also commemorate it as the winter solstice. It is a time to meditate on the cycle of life, death, and rebirth, and wait expectantly for the return of spring and new life.

Omisoka is considered the second-most important day in Japanese tradition, and is celebrated on the eve of New Year's Day. Families gather on Omisoka for one last time in the old year to have a bowl of toshikoshi-udon, a tradition based on eating the long noodles to cross over from one year to the next.

This December embrace the diversity of our world and explore the holiday traditions of other cultures.

Work Cited:

www.worldstrides.com

Thanks to Capt Sally Williams, Iowa Wing Diversity Officer for the above Happy Holidays information.

Cultural Observances and Awareness Events

Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday, 18 January 2021, Public Law 98-144

National African American/Black History Month, 1-28 February 2021, Public Law 100-9

Women's History Month, 1-31 March 2021, Public Law 100-9

Days of Remembrance & Holocaust Remembrance, 4-11 April 2021, Public Law 96-388

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, 1-31 May 2021, Title 36, U.S. Code, Section 102

Women's Equality Day, 26 August 2021, Public Law 93-105

National Hispanic Heritage Month, 15 September-15 October 2021, Title 36, U.S. Code Section 126

National Disability Employment Awareness Month, 1-31 October 2021, Title 36, U.S. Code Section 121

National American Indian Heritage Month, 1-30 November 2021, Public Law 103-462

PLEASE NOTE: DEOMI lists only observances established by law, bill, or resolution of Congress. Nothing precludes an organization from creating their own theme or using previously published themes. Organizations are not required to limit their special observances to just those reflected here. Organizations are reminded that special observances are conducted to recognize the continuous achievements of all Americans to American culture and to increase awareness, mutual respect, and understanding. They are designed to enhance cross-cultural and cross gender awareness and promote harmony among all military members, their families, and the DOD civilian workforce. For more information about how to conduct a special observance, please visit: www.deomi.org.

Above observances list is an approved CAP listing from Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI). www.deomi.org or www.defenseculture.mil Go to Human Relations Toolkit, Special Observances. This site will have special observance information posted during each observance timeframe.

Wishing you joy throughout the holidays (and beyond), and sincerely hope you enjoy all your celebrations!

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