

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY THE JOINT DEI
COMMITTEE

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Making Connections Through DEI Discourse

Mental Health and IDD

The month of May is dedicated to increasing awareness around issues of mental health and care access. Millions of people in the United States have mental health disorders. COVID-19 has taken a severe toll on the mental health of many Americans, exacerbating the daily stress and strain that many people encounter on a daily basis. Being able to support children's mental health needs starts early in life and can have a long-term impact on overall health and wellbeing. Parents, communities, schools, workplaces and healthcare providers play a role in managing people's mental health, however, research shows that these parties work in silos with little coordination and collaboration. This is particularly evident in the IDD community.

There are some common myths about children with IDD and mental health illness. Some people feel that children with IDD are immune to mental health issues. Or that traditional mental health care will be ineffective for them. Or that mental health therapy will be in contradiction with the supports and services needed by the child. Those assertions are simply wrong. There is no reason why a child with IDD cannot have mental health issues at the same time. The most important thing to remember is that anyone, including family members, teachers, therapists, caregivers, and other support providers, can easily misinterpret people with IDD. Caregivers and professionals who work with people with IDD may be unaware that a mental health issue is causing certain challenging behaviors leading to misdiagnosis.

Mental health issues have a direct impact on the quality and length of a person's life. This suggests that focusing on mental health can truly help. This is true for all children and adults, but especially for young adults with intellectual disabilities. Research shows that people with IDD have two to three times the rate of mental health issues as those without IDD. According to the findings of the study, the frequency of coexisting of IDD and mental health issues ranged from 13.9% to 75.2%. Individuals with autism, for example, appear to have more defined statistics, with a 49% mental health coexisting rate by age 16 discovered in a 2011 study of 4,343 children with autism.

Depression and anxiety appear to be the two most frequently diagnosed mental health conditions among people with IDD, but they are far from alone. People with IDD have a greater risk of schizophrenia than those without IDD. Post-traumatic stress disorder has also been found as a significant source of mental health issues in people with IDD.

When people do not receive enough treatment for their mental health conditions, crises can occur. Even if enough services are provided, crises may occur. So, it is vital for us to pay attention to the access, and types of access to mental health care that people with IDD need. We must do everything necessary to prevent people from reaching crisis levels, but we must also be ready to help people and families who do.

A number of roadblocks have slowed down our progress in meeting the mental health needs of people with IDD. The difficulties, however, should not prevent us from addressing these issues. People with IDD may require more mental health care for a variety of reasons. They may have increased stress and tough social challenges. They are more likely to experience abuse, neglect, bullying, restraint, and other forms of trauma. Common mental health diagnoses in children with IDD include anxiety, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and behavioral issues. Read our Did You Know section below to discover more research-based facts about mental health and IDD. Let's learn together and work on strategies to improve the mental health of people we serve, care about, and love.



Sources:

[The Arc](#)

[Navigate Life](#)



Did You Know?

The Intersection of IDD and Mental Health

Approximately 30% of all people with IDD will have a mental health issue at some point in their lives. Individuals with IDD are also more likely to be subjected to trauma, and they may be more susceptible and easily hurt by these occurrences because they may not be able to process their thoughts as easily as others, or they may have less access to the social support needed to cope with these feelings.

People with IDD are especially sensitive to coexisting mental health issues such as major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, psychotic illnesses, impulse control difficulties, and others. Most mental health practitioners have limited training in meeting the requirements of the IDD community and their mental health, and system structures frequently separate care, despite the fact that problems can be complicated and can overlap.

Considerations and challenges for attending to the mental health of people with IDD include early detection of mental health conditions, which frequently requires caregiver and family input, as well as information from a variety of other collateral sources; the importance of trauma informed and person-centered care; the promotion of self-determination through the use of decision supports; and the use of approaches such as applied behavior analysis to develop treatment plans.

Study Highlights

- People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) often have coexisting mental health conditions.
- Getting treatment for coexisting IDD and mental health conditions typically requires accessing separate branches of care across two self-isolating care systems.
- Even though the lack of integrated care options for individuals with IDD and mental health conditions and the need for a skilled workforce have long been recognized, system structural problems and professional training gaps continue.
- In the mid-1900s, one school of thought held that people with developmental disabilities could not also have mental health issues, and that any behavioral concerns were the product of intellectual disability.

Did You Know?

The Intersection of IDD and Mental Health

Continued...

- Psychiatric disorders, such as major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, psychotic disorders, anxiety disorders, impulse control disorders, major neurocognitive disorders, and stereotypic movement disorder, have been shown to be three to four times more common in people with IDD than in people without IDD.
- Psychiatric illness may manifest differently in people with intellectual & developmental disabilities.
- Attending to the complexity of racial prejudices in how individuals may be recognized, diagnosed, supported, or treated is as crucial in identifying and dealing with mental health in people with IDD.
- A cookie-cutter approach does not function well in the IDD community since there is so much variation (diversity).
- People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) who have coexisting mental health issues must frequently seek treatment for these conditions by transitioning from the developmental disabilities system, where they are generally served, to the mental health system.
- The legal, regulatory, policy, and practice standards for mental health and developmental disabilities are different, putting the burden of care integration on the person rather than the systems.
- System and policy reforms can help to integrate care for people with IDD who have mental health issues, but more work is needed to develop a solid continuum of care.

Access to these studies by clicking below

[Persons With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in the Mental Health System](#)



AHRC Nassau
Brookville Center for Children Services &
Citizens Options Unlimited

Words & Concepts of the Month

Taking Care of Your Mental Health

Now, more than ever, we need to find ways to stay connected to ourselves, our loved ones, and our community. No one should feel alone or without support.

Taking care of yourself during Mental Health Awareness Month and beyond

Mental health is a person's general sense of emotional, psychological, and cognitive well-being. Everyone has mental health every day, but it's often ignored unless something is going seriously wrong. The best way to prevent that is to pay attention to your mental health even when you are feeling okay or good.

Notice how your mental health is always changing. Yesterday might have been a better day than today, and that's okay. Part of being human is moving with your emotions and knowing when something isn't going exactly how you want it to, check in with yourself, and reach out to your friends and family for help when you need to take some time for your mental health or don't know what to do.

Here are a few tips for taking care of yourself:

- Accept yourself as you are.
- Write down your daily accomplishments rather than, or in addition to, your to do list. Celebrate those accomplishments.
- Create a self-care plan to support your mental well-being in your daily life. Finding joy, connecting with others, helping others, learning something new, and finding spiritual connections on a daily basis can help us flourish.
- Learn how to cope with stress with practical exercises like taking a few slow deep breaths, focusing on each of your senses, and trying to be fully present in what you're doing.
- Make small goals, taking time for yourself is not something that will happen overnight.
- Get out in nature, be present with your surroundings.

Visit Mental Health America's website with more resources and tips on managing mental well-being.

988

988 is the new, three-digit number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL). It is now available nation-wide.

988 is more than just an easy-to-remember number. It is a direct connection to caring support for anyone in mental health distress. This may include:

- thoughts of suicide
- substance use crisis
- emotional distress

988 is a free service available to everyone.

HOW TO CONTACT 988

You can contact 988 by chat, text, or phone.

Call or text 988 to be connected with a trained crisis counselor. When you call, you can access support in Spanish by pressing 2. Interpretation services are available in over 150 languages. To access 988 via chat, visit 988lifeline.org/chat

Sources

NYS Office of Mental Health

988 Lifeline



Mental Health is Important

Please click the title of each video to access the link



There's no shame in taking care of your mental health

by Sangu Delle

When stress got to be too much for TED Fellow Sangu Delle, he had to confront his own deep prejudice: that men shouldn't take care of their mental health. In a personal talk, Delle shares how he learned to handle anxiety in a society that's uncomfortable with emotions. As he says: "Being honest about how we feel doesn't make us weak -- it makes us human."



The mental health benefits of storytelling for health care workers

by Laurel Braitman

Health care workers are under more stress than ever before. How can they protect their mental health while handling new and complex pressures? TED Fellow Laurel Braitman shows how writing and sharing personal stories helps physicians, nurses, medical students and other health professionals connect more meaningfully with themselves and others -- and make their emotional well-being a priority.

This Month...

Mental Health Awareness Month

Raises awareness for those living with mental health issues. This month also seeks to support families or communities who are impacted by mental health issues.

[Learn more](#)



Older Americans Month

Celebrates how older Americans contribute to the United States. The 2023 theme is Aging Unbound, which offers an opportunity to explore diverse aging experiences and discuss how communities can combat stereotypes. Join us in promoting flexible thinking about aging – and how we all benefit when older adults remain engaged, independent, and included.

[Learn more](#)



Jewish American Heritage Month

In 2020 the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia repositioned Jewish American Heritage Month to empower communities across the country to celebrate the history of Jewish people in America; educate diverse public audiences about Jewish culture; and spark crucial conversations about the American Jewish present and future.

[Learn more](#)



Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month (as of 2009, officially changed from Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month) is observed in the United States during the month of May, and recognizes the contributions and influence of Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Americans to the history, culture, and achievements of the United States.

[Learn more](#)



ALS Awareness Month

A campaign to spread awareness of and raise funds for research for a cure for ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease).

[Learn more](#)



Haitian Heritage Month

Haitian Heritage Month is a nationally recognized month celebrated in May every year. It is a great time to celebrate the vibrant culture, distinct art, delectable cuisine, and to get to know people of Haitian origin.

[Learn more](#)



Speech and Hearing Awareness Month

Better Hearing and Speech Month (BHSM), founded in 1927 by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). Each May, this annual event provides an opportunity to raise awareness about hearing and speech problems, and to encourage people to think about their own hearing and get their hearing checked.

[Learn more](#)



Days of the Month

May 1 International Workers Day

International Workers' Day, also known as Labor Day in some countries and often referred to as May Day, is a celebration of laborers and the working classes that is promoted by the international labor movement and occurs every year on May 1st, or the first Monday in May.

[Learn more](#)



May 1 Beltane

An ancient Celtic, Pagan, and Wiccan holiday commemorated about halfway between the spring equinox and summer solstice. The day is summer solstice. The day is often used to celebrate love and romance.

[Learn More](#)



May 3 Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Women's Equal Pay Day

Today, the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) marks Equal Pay Day as the day when the earnings of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) women “catch up” to what white men made the year before.

[Learn more](#)



May 3 Feasts of Saints Philip and James

On May 3rd, the Church celebrates the Feast of Saints Philip and James to honor two early disciples of Jesus, who were among the original Twelve Apostles.

[Learn more](#)



May 4 National Day of Prayer

A day of observance in the United States when people are asked to “turn to God in prayer and meditation.”

[Learn more](#)



May 5 Red Dress Day (Canada)

Red Dress Day honors the memories of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls across Canada. Métis artist Jaime Black helped inspire the red dress movement, where red dresses are hung from windows and trees to represent the pain and loss felt by loved ones and survivors.

[Learn More](#)



May 5 Vesak, or Buddha Jayanti, Buddha Purnima, and Buddha Day

A holiday traditionally observed by Buddhists in South Asia and Southeast Asia as well as Tibet and Mongolia. Buddha Purnima is on May 5 this year (in India and Nepal) or May 19 (for those in Southeast Asian countries). The date varies because May has two full moon days, and the Buddhist and Hindu lunar calendars can be interpreted differently. Buddha’s birth is celebrated as part of a festival called ‘Vesak,’ which combines the three key events of his life – his birth, enlightenment, and death. Join us on a deep dive into the fascinating life of this profound spiritual leader.



[Learn more](#)

May 5 Cinco de Mayo

Cinco de Mayo is a yearly celebration held on May 5, which commemorates the anniversary of Mexico's victory over the Second French Empire at the Battle of Puebla in 1862, led by General Ignacio Zaragoza.

[Learn more](#)



May 8-9 (sundown to sundown) Lag BaOmer, also Lag B'Omer or LaOmer

A Jewish religious holiday celebrated on the 33rd day of the Counting of the Omer, which occurs on the 18th day of the Hebrew month of Iyar.

[Learn more](#)



May 14 Mother's Day

Mother's Day is a celebration honoring the mother of the family or individual, as well as motherhood, maternal bonds, and the influence of mothers in society. It is celebrated on different days in many parts of the world, most commonly in the months of March or May.

[Learn more](#)



May 16 International Day of Living Together in Peace

The International Day of Living Together in Peace is observed every year on 16 May; The Day aims to uphold the desire to live and act together, united in differences and diversity, in order to build a sustainable world of peace, solidarity and harmony. Living together in peace is all about accepting differences and having the ability to listen to, recognize, respect and appreciate others, as well as living in a peaceful and united way.

[Learn more](#)



May 17 International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia

Aims to raise awareness of LGBTQIA+ rights violations and stimulate interest in LGBTQIA+ rights work worldwide. By 2016 the commemorations had taken place in over 130 countries. The founders of the International Day Against Homophobia, as it was originally known, established the IDAHO Committee to coordinate grass-roots actions in different countries, to promote the day and to lobby for official recognition on May 17. That date was chosen to commemorate the decision to remove homosexuality from the International Classification of Diseases of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1990. [



[Learn more](#)

May 18 Ascension of Jesus or Ascension Day

The Solemnity of the Ascension of Jesus Christ, also called Ascension Day, Ascension Thursday, or sometimes Holy Thursday, commemorates the Christian belief of the bodily Ascension of Jesus into heaven. It is one of the ecumenical feasts of Christian churches, ranking with the feasts of the Passion and Pentecost.



[Learn more](#)

May 18 Global Accessibility Awareness Day

Global Accessibility Awareness Day is an awareness day focusing on digital access and inclusion for the more than one billion people alive today who live with disabilities. It is marked annually on the third Thursday of May.



[Learn more](#)

May 19 Malcolm X's Birthday

Well-known Muslim minister and civil rights activist, who was assassinated in 1965. Malcolm X was an American Muslim minister and human rights activist who was a prominent figure during the civil rights movement.



[Learn more](#)



May 20 Asian Gold Ribbon Day

Stand in Solidarity against Anti-Asian Racism. Since the beginning of the pandemic there's been an increase of reported hate motivated crimes towards the Asian communities across North America. The Human Rights Watch insists that "national action plans needed to counter intolerance," and reveals a pandemic of anti-Asian hate in relation to COVID-19 in Italy, Brazil, France, Australia, Russia, UK, Spain, Kenya, Ethiopia, South Africa, Malaysia, Middle East, South Korea, Japan, and Indonesia.

[Learn more](#)



May 21 World Day of Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

The World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development is a United Nations–sanctioned international holiday for the promotion of diversity and dialogue issues. It is currently celebrated on May 21.

[Learn more](#)



May 22 International Day of Families

The International Day of Families is observed on 15 May every year. The Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993 with resolution A/RES/47/237 and reflects the importance the international community attaches to families.

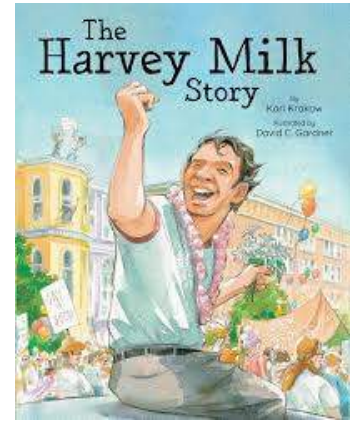
[Learn more](#)



May 22 Harvey Milk Day (LGBTQIA+ Civil Rights Leader)

As the first openly gay man elected to public office in the United States, Milk's election was a triumph over anti-LGBTQIA+ stereotypes. Milk's ability to mobilize LGBTQIA+ people and straight people alike resulted in the defeat of a statewide proposition to severely limit LGBTQIA+'s employment rights. Though Milk was assassinated 11 months after he was elected to office, his legacy of fighting for LGBTQIA+ rights has inspired a new generation of civic activists across the United States.

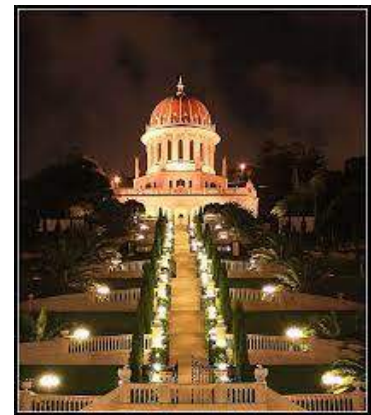
[Learn more](#)



May 22 Declaration of the Bab (Baha'i)

On a spring evening on May 22rd, 1844, Siyyid Ali-Muhammad announced that He was the bearer of a Divine Revelation whose aim was to prepare the world for "Him Whom God Shall Make Manifest," a Messenger of God known as Baha'u'llah.

[Learn more](#)



May 25 Africa Day

Africa Day is the annual commemoration of the foundation of the Organization of African Unity on 25 May 1963. It is celebrated in various countries on the African continent, as well as around the world.

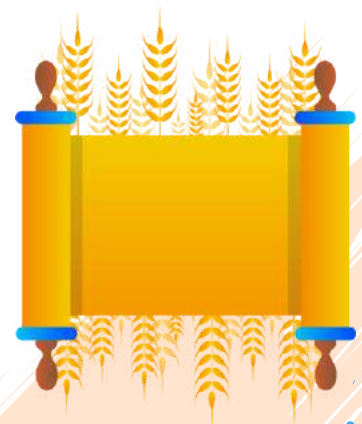
[Learn more](#)



May 25-27 Shavuot

A Jewish holiday that has double significance. It marks the wheat harvest in Israel and commemorates the anniversary of the day when the Jews received the Torah at Mount Sinai.

[Learn more](#)



May 28 International Day of Action for Women's Health

The International Day of Action for Women's Health is an international observance celebrated on May 28 every year since 1987.

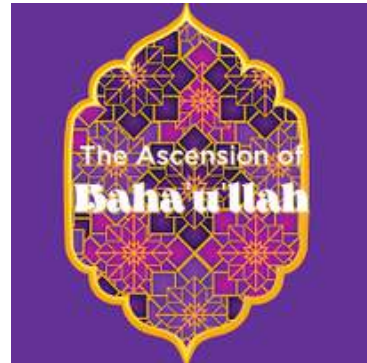
[Learn more](#)



May 28 - 29 Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh

Commemorates the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í faith. Baha'u'llah, the Prophet-Founder of the Baha'i Faith, passed away on 29 May, 1892. This holy day is commemorated by Baha'is all over the world and is known as 'The Ascension of Baha'u'llah'.

[Learn more](#)



May 28 Pentecost

A Christian holiday which takes place on the 50th day after Easter Sunday. It commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ

[Learn more](#)



May 29 Memorial Day

Memorial Day is a federal holiday in the United States for mourning the U.S. military personnel who have died while serving in the United States armed forces.

[Learn more](#)



May 30 World Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Day

Multiple Sclerosis impacts more than 2.3 million people around the world. The term multiple sclerosis means "many scars," and this term relates to the areas that appear on the brain and spinal cord after the myelin covering our nerves is damaged or dies.

[Learn more](#)

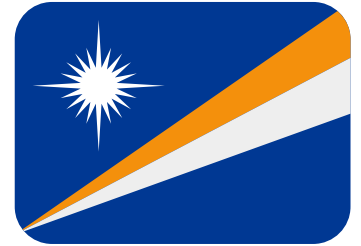


Independence Days Around The World

May 1 Marshal Islands Constitution Day

Constitution Day is the national day of the Marshall Islands celebrated on May 1 that marks independence from the United States. It commemorates the adoption of the 1979 Constitution of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, which established the archipelago as a self-governing country.

[Click to learn more](#)



May 14 & 15 Paraguay

This public holiday is celebrated on May 14th. The holiday lasts for two days and May 15th is the National Day of Paraguay. Known in Spanish as 'Día de la Independencia Nacional', this holiday celebrates Paraguay's independence from Spain in 1811.

[Click to learn more](#)



May 18 Somaliland Independence Day

An annual celebration held on 18 May in Somaliland to mark the polity's declaration of independence from the Somali Democratic Republic, a unilateral proclamation which remains unrecognized the world over.

[Click to learn more](#)



May 20 Cameroon National Day

Also known as Unity Day, this holiday marks the adoption of a unitary state on this day in 1972. Cameroon became a German colony in 1884, known as Kamerun. After Germany's defeat in the first world war, the administration of the colony was divided between Britain and France, becoming UN Trust Territories after the end of the second world war and the creation of the United Nations.

[Click to learn more](#)



May 24 Eritrea Independence Day

The Eritrean People's Liberation Front forces moved into the capital city of Asmara and reinstated independence after a war against the Ethiopian military regime. This war went on for 30 years. It is one of the most important public holidays in the country, along with Martyrs' Day and Revolution Day.

[Click to learn more](#)



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May 25 Jordan Independence Day (عيد الاستقلال)

Independence Day is most important event in the history of Jordan, marking its independence from the British government. Though a treaty was signed on March 22, 1946, it was two years later when Jordan became fully independent. In March 1948, Jordan signed a new treaty in which all restrictions on sovereignty were removed to guarantee Jordan's independence from Britain.

[Click to learn more](#)

May 26 Georgia Independence Day

Georgia is a country situated right where Eastern Europe and Western Asia intersect. The origin story of Georgia's independence begins after the Russian Revolution of 1917 with the adoption of the Act of Independence.

[Click to learn more](#)

May 26 Guyana Independence Day

The British government hosted a conference in London regarding independence for British Guiana on November 2-7, 1965, and the British government agreed to grant independence to British Guiana in May 1966.

[Click to learn more](#)

May 28 Armenia Republic Day

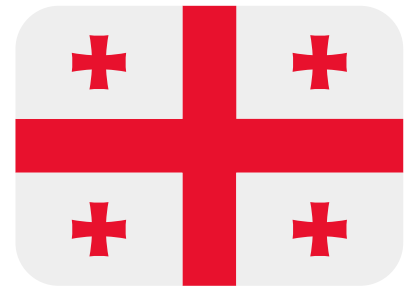
Armenia was proclaimed an independent republic on May 28, 1918. The republic was short lived, and as of December 2, 1920, the Red Army invaded Armenia and proclaimed it a Soviet Republic. Armenia regained its independence in 1991.

[Click to learn more](#)

May 28 Azerbaijan Independence Day

Following the fall of the Tsarist government in Russia as a result of the October Revolution, the Caucasian peoples, including Azerbaijanis, formed a Special Committee, which was followed by a Commissariat and, finally, the independent Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic. The new federation lasted only six weeks before Georgia declared its independence from it. Armenia and Azerbaijan followed two days later, on 28 May 1918.

[Click to learn more](#)



A Look at Mother's Day

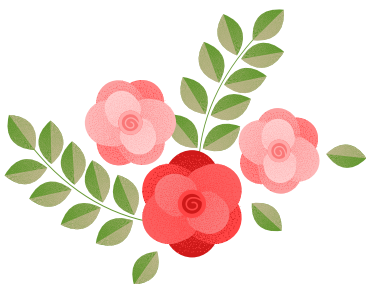
By Susan Gill-Orange

In the long history of humanity, mothers have always been honored in one way or another. Ancient Greeks and Romans, held festivals in honor of the mother goddesses Rhea and Cybele, but the clearest modern precedent for Mother's Day is the early Christian festival known as Mothering Sunday

Mothering Sunday, observed primarily in England and parts of Europe, has its origins in the Middle Ages. It was a celebration, held in the mid Lenten season, when the faithful returned to visit the "Mother Church" or the church where they were baptized. The church was like a "pious mother" who rejoiced at those spiritually born. According to a 1926 booklet by C.P. Smith, "A Short History of Mothering Sunday", it was "anciently the rule in many places for the priest and the people to go in procession on Mothering Sunday to the mother Church in the district where gifts were laid at the altar" for the good of the community. This annual visit during the pensive time of Lent brought families together so that the religious observance mingled with a family festival honoring earthly mothers. Christians united together on Mothering Sunday to honor the church considered, "The Mother of us all" and to express their love for their earthly mothers who are indeed the "Mothers of them all"

The tradition of Mothering Sunday continues in England to this day with church going and the baking of Simnel cakes. However, in May of 1908 a woman named Anna Jarvis was determined to make this particularly Anglican holiday an American one as well. Inspired by the death of her own beloved mother, Jarvis, with the financial backing of Wanamaker's Department Store, celebrated the First official American Mother's Day held at a Methodist Church in West Virginia.

Because of the publicity engendered by Wanamaker's, thousands of people attended a Mother's Day event at their store in Philadelphia. Following this success, Jarvis began a letter writing campaign to newspapers and politicians across the country in a determined effort to make Mother's Day a National Holiday. Her relentless determination paid off and in 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed a measure making the second Sunday in May, Mother's Day. Although Jarvis became disappointed in the commercialism of the day, Americans continue to observe that spring day in May as a time to honor their mothers with celebration.



Recipe of the Month

By Susan Gill-Orange

Mother's Day Shortcake

Ingredients

- 3 pints fresh strawberries
- ½ cup white sugar
- 2 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 tablespoons white sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅓ cup shortening
- 1 egg
- ⅔ cup milk
- 2 cups whipped heavy cream



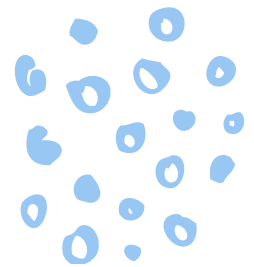
Directions

- Slice the strawberries and toss them with 1/2 cup of white sugar. Set aside.
- Preheat oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C). Grease and flour one 8-inch round cake pan.
- In a medium bowl combine the flour, baking powder, 2 tablespoons white sugar and the salt. With a pastry blender cut in the shortening until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Make a well in the center and add the beaten egg and milk.
- Stir mixture until just combined.
- Spread the batter into the prepared pan.
- Bake at 425 degrees F (220 degrees C) for 15 to 20 minutes or until golden brown. Let cool partially in pan on wire rack.
- Slice partially cooled cake in half, making two layers.
- Place half of the strawberries on one layer and top with the other layer. Top with remaining strawberries and cover with the whipped cream.

Call for Submissions, Feedback and Suggestions

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Monthly Newsletter invites contributions to our monthly publication that fits into the following categories:

- News items and announcements
- Short stories
- Recognitions
- Member profiles



Tell us what you want to see more of!

Send us your feedback!



Submit your materials to:
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DEI Officer
snoveiri@ahrc.org