



# CONNECT

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## Celebration of New Year

By: **Cedalia Ellis, MSW, LCSW**

The start of a new year is generally a time to reflect on the past year's challenges, successes, and progress. We often think of new goals, new behaviors, and changes we must make. Our diversity, equity, and engagement (D.E.E.) could not have been accomplished without you, and there is still more work to do. From a D.E.E. perspective, I hope you consider how you can take one more step toward making our company a place where everyone can thrive and succeed. It is essential to reflect upon how a simple behavior such as getting to know a colleague who is different from you can make a significant impact. So, as you start working on your goals for 2022, consider implementing a D.E.E. goal. It will change your life and the lives of others.

**DIVERSITY EQUITY &  
ENGAGEMENT  
NEWSLETTER**

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# 2021 D.E.E REVIEW

TERRY GISH

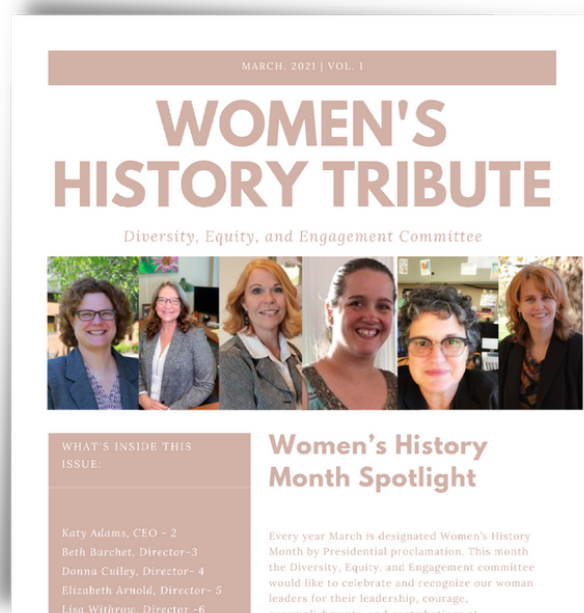
Early in 2021, Cedalia (CeCe) Ellis met with Katy Adams to discuss the possibility of forming some type of company Diversity committee. Katy gave the idea an enthusiastic green light, and then the announcement of the new committee was made at a Leadership Team meeting on January 27th. Interested employees were told to contact CeCe.

Then, things began to explode (in a good way). Committee membership started to take shape in February, and the name Diversity Equity and Engagement (DEE) committee was selected.

The committee's first publication was for Black History Month. An article was shared that highlighted Hillcrest's history of Washington Youth Home being a segregated facility for Evansville's Black youth. Additional articles were written in March to salute Southwestern's leadership for Women's History Month. In April, the DEE Committee's writing elevated to the next level, when the Connect newsletter was created. This newsletter became a tool for monthly education and cultural celebration, both by and for Southwestern employees.

The group's endeavors quickly expanded, so much so that subcommittees were formed to take on specific projects. These included the Climate Assessment, Cultural Humility Training, and Celebration of Diversity and Heritage subcommittees.

On June 24th, the DEE committee hosted its first Cultural Humility Panel, focusing on LGBTQ+ pride. This kicked off a series of panels, the next one (on October 14th) spotlighting microaggressions.



# 2021 D.E.E REVIEW

TERRY GISH

On July 27th, the DEE committee invited all of Southwestern to share in celebrating diversity by offering R.I.S.E (Respect, Inclusion, Social Justice, and Equity) t-shirts for sale. Over 100 shirts were sold during the initial order. More than 25 additional shirts were purchased during a second order.

In September, the DEE Committee began taking steps for Southwestern to join our community’s “E is for Everyone” campaign. A Southwestern-specific logo was created that was approved by Mayor Winnecke in October. Later, “E is for Everyone” window stickers were created for each location to display and declare that Southwestern truly is for everyone.

On December 2nd, the DEE committee presented (live and via Zoom) Celebrating Holidays Around the World. This provided an opportunity to share information about different cultural celebrations that take place during the winter months.

Not yet a year after its inception, the DEE committee is excited about how much was accomplished in 2021, not just by committee members but by Southwestern as a whole. The company has already made great strides in its efforts to promote a feeling of inclusion and respect for all employees. We are excited to see what 2022 brings!





“The D.E.E. Committee invites you to continue growing alongside us in our knowledge and understanding regarding the traditions celebrated by people all over the world, and within our own community.”

## New Year, Celebrations, & Traditions!

*Jennifer Greenlee, BS*

In the United States of America, January is typically observed as the first month of the new year, with New Years Day being celebrated on January 1st. We also typically celebrate the beginning of a new year with our own traditions. For example, my family eats black eyed peas, cabbage, and corn bread on New Years Day, which is said to represent coins, dollar bills, and gold, respectively. Eating these specific dishes is said to bring luck and good fortune. However, there are many other New Years traditions observed by different cultures all over the world. In this article, I will be detailing some of the lesser known (to me, at least) New Years traditions.

In Colombia, some people will carry empty suitcases around at midnight on New Years Eve in the hopes that the new year will bring many travel opportunities. Much like the black eyed peas that my family eats for wealth, some Colombian people will eat lentils or carry them in their pockets for the same reason. In Denmark, one of the more popular traditions observed to ring in the new year is smashing plates against doors in an effort to ward off bad spirits. Danish people may also “leap” off of a chair to represent them “leaping” into the new year. They may also eat Kransekage, which is a wreath-shaped cake made of stacked rings of marzipan, with a bottle of wine placed in the middle.

The cake is also decorated using ornaments and flags. In Greece, many people celebrate the new year by hanging an onion on their door on New Years Eve to attract prosperity and luck. On New Years Day morning, parents will tap the onion on the heads of their children to wake them up. In Brazil, some people celebrate New Years Eve by honoring the Goddess of the Sea, Yemanja. White, silver, and blue garments are worn, and offerings of flowers and statues of Yemanja are presented. Some individuals may also send their prayers or wishes in small boats out to sea. If the boat returns, it is believed that the goddess has rejected the offerings, and the wish will not come true.

These are just a few of the traditions celebrated around the globe by many different cultures. The D.E.E. Committee invites you to continue growing alongside us in our knowledge and understanding regarding the traditions celebrated by people all over the world, and within our own community. We also hope that this new year will bring you the hope and prosperity that many of these traditions aim to manifest! Happy New Year!



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., (January 15, 1929–April 4, 1968) was born Michael Luther King, Jr., in the segregated south of Atlanta, Georgia. He later had his name changed to Martin. Dr. King graduated from high school at the age of fifteen. He went on to receive a B. A. degree in 1948 from Morehouse College, a distinguished African American institution of Atlanta from which both his father and grandfather had graduated. After three years of theological study at Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania, he was awarded the B.D. in 1951 and later receiving a doctorate degree in theology in 1955 at Boston University.

Dr. King comes from a long lineage of pastors. His grandfather began the family's long tenure as pastors of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, serving from 1914 to 1931; his father has served from then until the present, and from 1960 until his death Martin Luther acted as co-pastor.

Dr. King is most often remembered for his influence on race relations. He was a dedicated civil rights leader and his influence on social standards, race relations, justice and respect still saturate the United States' population today.

A majority of us here in America have been educated on Dr. King, know of his famous “I Have a Dream” speech or have observed the federal holiday to honor his legacy. His ‘I Have a Dream’ speech inspired thousands of individuals from all ethnicities to look beyond skin color, judging others based on actions and not on looks. Dr. King was very instrumental in the way he lead the movement by placing his life on the line for freedom and justice every day in hopes of civil rights reform. His actions also helped repeal the segregation laws, which were proven unconstitutional by a Supreme Court decision. This allowed non-whites to receive equal treatment and access to schools, transportation, and employment for the first time in all United States history.

As we reflect on Dr. King’s legacy, it is important that we remember the many contributions of his labor and legacy, and to make a vow to recognize the dignity within every human being.

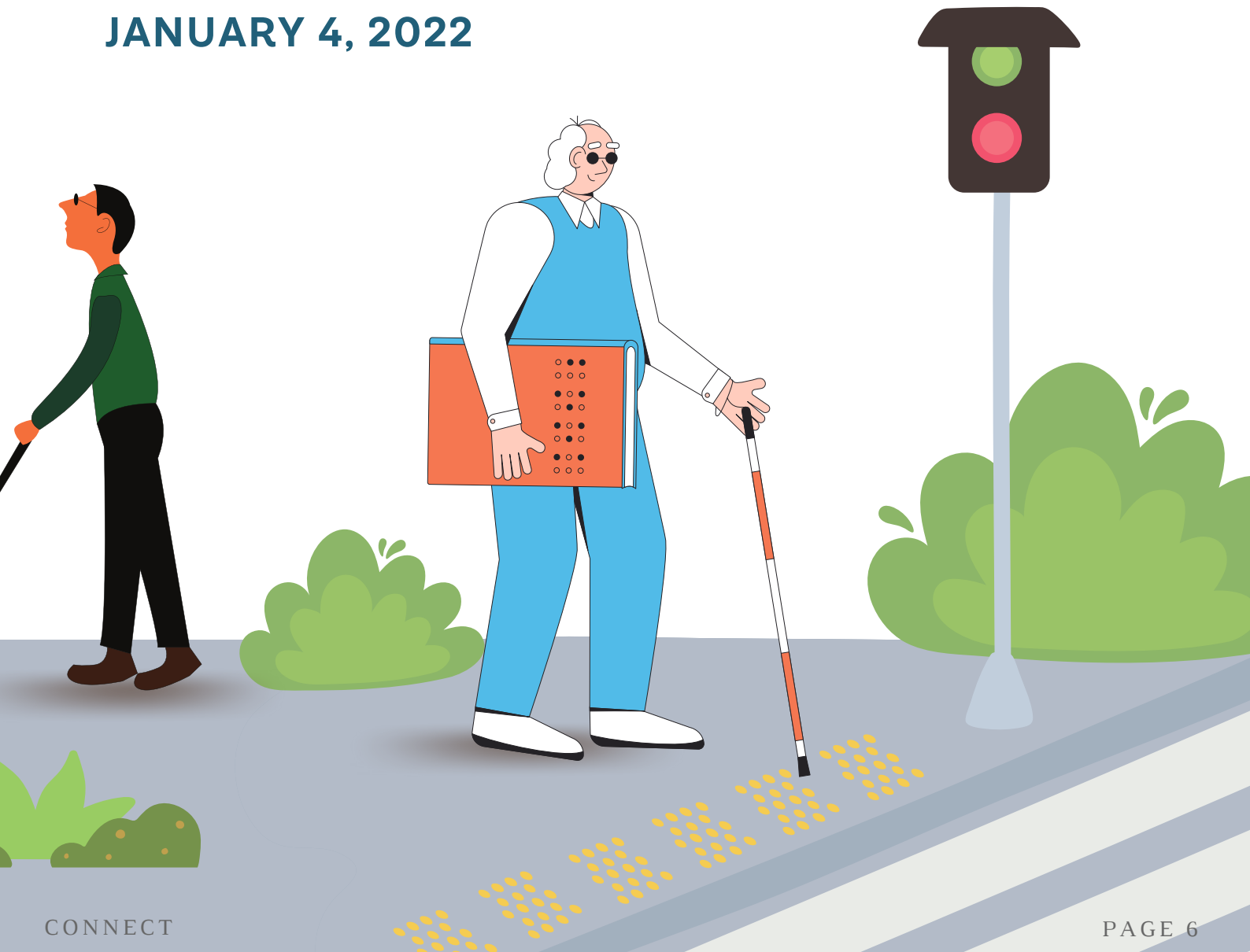


# World Braille Day

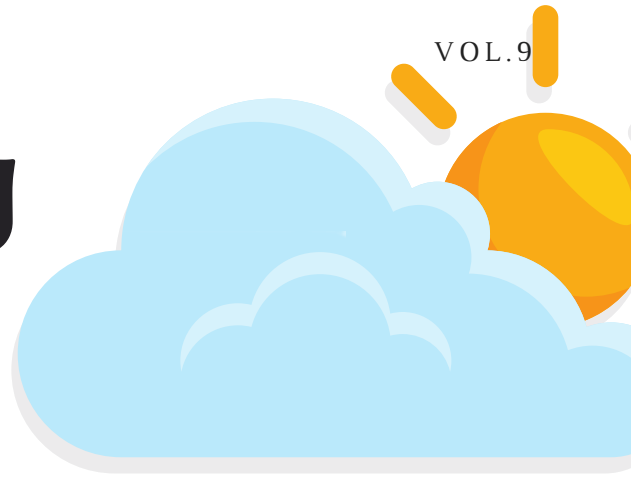


Braille is a tactile writing system used by people who are visually impaired, including people who are blind, deafblind or who have low vision.

**JANUARY 4, 2022**



# World Braille Day Timeline



**1824**

**A Job Well Done**

Louis Braille successfully completes the Braille system.

**1916**

**Let's Adopt**

In the U.S., schools for the blind adopt Braille officially.

**2011**

**The Braille Box is Awarded**

The Braille Box receives the internationally acclaimed Red Dot Design Award.

**2019**

**The First Braille Day**

The first World Braille Day is observed on January 4 and is celebrated around the world.



# WHY IT PAYS TO BE INCLUSIVE

Over the last year, our efforts on this committee have been guided and informed by cultural humility, a philosophy that emphasizes our shared humanity and gives us permission to speak our truth.

We have amplified diverse voices. We have encouraged our friends and colleagues to be vulnerable. We have built a foundation of acceptance, in hopes that, one day, all staff will feel secure in the knowledge that their contributions are valuable, and that they are welcome to live authentically.

We have done this for a number of reasons, most of which are fairly transparent. We want everyone to feel respected in the workplace, for instance, and respect comes from a place of mutual understanding. We want to challenge misconceptions while simultaneously challenging others to practice empathy. In short, we are stronger together, and cultivating a happy, healthy, collaborative workplace goes a long way toward building a formidable team.

I can certainly appreciate, though, that some among us might have doubts. Our intentions might sound good, and our efforts might seem well-intended, but as with all idealistic undertakings, it is perfectly reasonable and appropriate to question whether our kind words are likely to result in any substantive, measurable results. In other words, is diversity, equity, and engagement good for business?

Yes.

Across all industries, the success of a company is largely dependent on its ability to attract and retain diverse and flexible talent – employees who are able to respond to changing market demands and unforeseen challenges with innovative ideas.



**BY: TYLER PLOGHER, BS**

McKinsey & Company, an international management and consulting firm, has found substantial, sustained evidence of this principle. Not only does their research suggest that innovation is key to the financial success of companies, but innovation seems to be driven by diversity, to the extent that companies with robust diversity and inclusion programs are actually more innovative than their rivals (Dixon-Fyle, Dolan, Hunt, & Prince, 2021).

In an ongoing study of more than one thousand companies across fifteen countries, researchers found that highly inclusive companies were about 25% more likely to report above-average profits than minimally inclusive companies. Similarly, companies with diverse gender representation among executives were 25% more likely to report financial outperformance, and companies with ethnically diverse executive teams were 36% more likely to report financial outperformance. In other words, strong, systematic approaches to diversity and inclusion seem to result in more diverse, representative leadership, whose diverse ideas and perspectives result in innovation, which results in the financial outperformance of competitors.





But, why?

A diverse workforce led by diverse leaders is more representative of the actual world in which we live, and therefore its decision-making is less likely to become stagnant or to reflect a narrow, potentially inaccurate view of circumstances (Forbes Expert Panel, 2021), and exposure to diverse, challenging ideas not only appears to result in innovation, but it results in faster innovation, as thinking outside of the box becomes more collaborative and commonplace (Rock & Grant, 2016). A workforce that feels respected, valued, and whose strengths are utilized effectively is also less likely to experience burnout, meaning that it becomes easier to retain talent, turnover is reduced, and it costs-per-hire are reduced (Justworks, 2020). It is also of note that diverse companies that build strong relationships with diverse consumer communities gain access to new potential customers and sources of revenue.

Although our efforts on this committee have always been driven by a desire to create an open, empathic, and safe work environment, it should be recognized that we are not only making an investment in individuals, or in certain marginalized groups; we are establishing a framework to support growth and opportunities of all kind, for everyone employed by here at Southwestern and for everyone Southwestern serves. Not only are diversity and inclusion in keeping with the values of our company, diversity and inclusion make good business sense.



# celebrate MAHAYANA

## *The Origins and Practice of Holidays: Mahayana New Year*

**January 18th - Mahāyāna New Year**

### **What is Mahayana?**

- Mahāyāna, which means 'Great Vehicle' in English. Mahāyāna is also a term that refers to Buddhist philosophies and practices.

### **Other branch of Buddhism?**

- The other main branch of Buddhism is Theravada. Mahāyāna and Theravada Buddhism differ in a few ways.

### **Theravada Buddhism commonly practiced areas:**

- Theravada Buddhism is commonly practiced in Southeast Asia, in places such as Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Sri Lanka.
- Theravada Buddhism places importance on the language of Pali in worship, the birth language of Buddha.

### **Mahāyāna Buddhism commonly practiced areas:**

- Commonly practiced in Northeast Asia, in place such as Tibet, China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and Mongolia.

### **Mahāyāna Buddhists beliefs:**

- Enlightenment can be achieved during an individual's single or current lifetime. This enlightenment is not just reserved for monks; ordinary Buddhists also have the opportunity to achieve it. The goal for everyone is to become enlightened through service and helping others to achieve nirvana as well.

### **Celebrations of Mahāyāna New Year:**

- Mahāyāna Buddhists will celebrate by honoring and praying to their gods, particularly Buddha.
- Buddhists, the new year is a time for meditation and self reflection. The goal is to find ways to improve and learn from past mistakes.
- Buddha's statues will also be bathed as a show of respect.
- Religious songs are also offered to the deities.



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# HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

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January 27, 2022

January 27th is a day that is set aside to remember and honor the memory of the victims of the Holocaust, and reaffirms its unwavering commitment to counter antisemitism, racism, and other forms of intolerance that may lead to group-targeted violence.

Since 2005, the United Nations and its member states have held commemoration ceremonies to mark the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau and to honor the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust and millions of other victims of Nazism.



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