

# SPARK

HIGHLIGHTING DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVE OF ALL VOICES

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- International Holocaust Remembrance Day

### February

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- Black Women in Healthcare

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- Women in Healthcare
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Expand your knowledge  
JCHD Employee Spotlight



## JANUARY DATES TO REMEMBER

January 7

**Eastern Orthodox Christmas**  
**Mahayana New Year (Buddhist)**

January 13

**Korean American Day**

January 15

**Martin Luther King Jr. Day**

January 27

**International Holocaust Remembrance Day**

### DID YOU KNOW?

Martin Luther King Jr. had preached about his "dream" on previous occasions, but did not include it in his prepared speech for the march on Washington on Aug. 28, 1963. During a pause in his remarks, gospel singer Mahalia Jackson called out, "Tell 'em about the dream, Martin" and he then went off-script to preach the lines which now define the day.

In 2005, the UN General Assembly designated January 27 - the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau - as

## INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

In 2024, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) will commemorate the day by unveiling the "Blue Skies" multimedia exhibition, reflecting on collective trauma and remembrance. Anton Kusters, the artist, spent 6 years photographing empty blue skies above Nazi concentration camps where millions were killed, yet little physical evidence remains. The collection of 1,078 blue skies are stamped with coordinates and victim numbers. Kusters commented on the project: "I wanted to anchor each image by etching very specific numbers of locations of the specific end points of an institutionalized genocidal system, in which it was the intention to destroy people, to ultimately deny their existence, and to make them disappear into thin air."

For more information about the Day of Commemoration events, click [here](#).

## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE: MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

1. What was King's birth name? (His father changed it when Martin was 5 years old.)
2. How old was King when he entered college?
3. In what subject did King receive his doctorate degree?
4. How many times was King imprisoned?
5. True or false: King was the target for more than one assassination attempt.
6. How did King's mother die?
7. Where did King deliver his "I have a Dream" speech?
8. What civil rights organization did King found with Ralf Abernathy, Fred Shuttlesworth, and Joseph Lowery?

Answers on Page 3.

## FEBRUARY DATES TO REMEMBER

February 4

Rosa Parks Day

February 10

Chinese (Lunar) New Year

February 15

Nirvana Day (Buddhist)



## BLACK AMERICAN WOMEN IN THE HISTORY OF HEALTHCARE



### Kizzmekia Corbett, PhD

Dr. Corbett discovered a simple way to make the coronavirus spike protein more stable. Her research was instrumental in the development of the Moderna Covid19 vaccine and the first monoclonal antibody treatment for COVID-19. She continues to work in research, and is working to develop vaccines for Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and Dengue Fever.



### Mary Eliza Mahoney

While many African Americans served as nurses before her, Ms. Mahoney carries the distinction of the first Black nurse in history to graduate from an American nursing school and the first to earn a registered nursing license in the US. At 33, she entered the nursing program at the New England Hospital for Women and Children with 42 other students. She was one of only 4 who graduated from the program in 1879. She fought for increased access to nursing education and fought against discrimination throughout her career.



### Dr. Donna M. Christensen

was the first woman to represent the U.S. Virgin Islands and the first female medical doctor to serve in Congress. She worked to address social determinants of health and tackle HIV/AIDS threats both domestically and internationally.

## CHINESE NEW YEAR

begins on the date (in East Asia) of the second new Moon after the winter solstice, which always occurs in late December. This means that the first day of the Lunar New Year can occur anytime between January 21 and February 20. The holiday is sometimes called the Lunar New Year because the dates of celebration follow the phases of the moon.

In 2024, we ring in the Year of the Dragon, one of 12 animals in the Chinese zodiac. The animal designations of the zodiac follow a 12-year cycle and are always used in the same sequence.

Those born in the Year of the Dragon are believed to be ambitious, energetic, and charismatic, often inspiring others with their passion and enthusiasm. They are considered to be natural leaders, confident and unafraid to take risks, making them magnetic personalities in social and professional circles.

## CELEBRATE THE CHINESE NEW YEAR

with a traditional Chinese New Year dish!

## CHUN JUAN (SPRING ROLLS)

Spring rolls (chun juan) take their name from the holiday for which they're traditionally prepared: the Spring Festival (chunjie), also known as Chinese New Year. The crisp golden rolls are meant to symbolize bars of gold and bring wealth and prosperity in the year to come.

Sound appetizing? Read the instructions [here!](#)



# MARCH DATES TO REMEMBER

March 1

Mardi Gras

March 2

Ash Wednesday

March 8

International Women's Day

March 10

Ramadan (begins)

March 17

St. Patrick's Day

March 23

Purim

March 31

Easter

• March 2nd •

## ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

President Woodrow Wilson signed the Jones-Shafroth Act (1917) on March 2, 1917, giving Puerto Ricans U.S. statutory citizenship.



### Joycelyn Elders

is a pediatrician and public health administrator. As head of the Arkansas Department of Health she campaigned for clinics and expanded sex education, causing a storm of controversy among conservatives and religious groups. Despite opposition, she nearly doubled childhood immunizations rates, expanded the state's prenatal care program, and increased home-care options for the chronically or terminally ill. Largely because of her lobbying, the Arkansas Legislature mandated a K-12 curriculum that included sex education, substance-abuse prevention, and programs to promote self-esteem. In 1993 Dr. Elders became the first Black U.S. Surgeon General.



### Henrietta Lacks

was a Black woman whose cancer cells are the source of the HeLa cell line, the first immortalized human cell line. Research done with HeLa cells underpins much of modern medicine. While she was a cancer patient, doctors at Johns Hopkins Hospital removed and gave some of her tissue to a researcher without Lacks's knowledge or consent. Her story illustrates some of the racial inequities that are embedded in the U.S. research and healthcare systems. One of her cells' most recent applications has been in research for vaccines against COVID-19.

## PURIM

### WHAT IS IT AND HOW IS IT CELEBRATED?

Purim is a Jewish festival held in spring to commemorate the defeat of Haman's plot to massacre the Jews as recorded in the book of Esther. The ritual observance of Purim begins with a day of fasting the day before the festival begins.

The four main celebrations of Purim include:

- a public reading of the book of Esther
- dressing in costume to rejoice and gather with family and friends
- preparing food baskets to deliver to loved ones
- donating to the poor



### FUN FACTS ABOUT

## Irish American Heritage Month

- There are more than 6 times more U.S. residents that claim Irish ancestry (31.5 mil) than residents of Ireland (5 mil).
- St. Patrick's day commemorates St. Patrick, who brought Christianity to Ireland in the 5th century.
- New York City has the highest number of Irish residents, but Boston has the highest percentage of the population.
- There are 9 cities in the U.S. that share a name with Ireland's capital city. Dublin, Ohio is the most populous, at 31,392.
- Ireland's most common surname is Murphy.

1. Michael 2. 15 3. Theology 4. 29 5. True. He was stabbed in the chest with a letter opener in 1958. 6. She was shot in church by a gunman targeting MLK Sr. 7. Washington, D.C. 8. NAACP



## EXPAND YOUR DEI KNOWLEDGE

### ***High on the Hog: How African American Cuisine Transformed America***

Black food is American food. Chef and writer Stephen Satterfield traces the delicious, moving throughlines from Africa to Texas in this docuseries.

### ***Something Must be Done About Prince Edward County* by Kristen Green**

In the wake of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, Virginia's Prince Edward County refused to obey the way. Green tells the story of families divided by the school closures and of 1,700 black children denied an education.

### ***Schindler's List***

1993 Historical Drama depicting industrialist Oskar Schindler in German-occupied Poland during WWII. Schindler gradually becomes concerned for his Jewish workforce after witnessing their persecution by the Nazis.

### ***Hidden Figures***

Drama featuring the story of female African American mathematicians who served a vital role in NASA during the early years of the U.S. space program.



## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: JILL BIERMANN

Q: What inspired your career choice?

A: My grandmother. She helped raise me. She expressed her love language by caring for others and passed it on to me.

Q: What was the first job you ever had?

A: My first job at 14 was a hospital nurse's aide. Yep, at 14. My dad had to sign a work release for me to work. I worked at Chester Hospital until I graduated nursing school.

Q: If you could speak any language, what would it be?

A: French. My children took French in college, and they are both fluent.

Q: If you could have dinner with one famous person (dead or alive) who would it be?

A: My famous person is not famous to anyone but me. It would be my dad. He died 11 years ago. One more conversation would mean so much.

Q: What is one thing on your bucket list?

My bucket list is composed of travel destinations: Italy, Greece, Ireland, everywhere outside of the U.S.

Q: What is your favorite holiday/holiday tradition?

A: 4th of July. I know this is an unusual choice, but I am from Steeleville, IL. When I was little, the 4th celebration was such a big deal with the parade, picnic, and fireworks. My grandparents lived a block away from the park where the picnic was held. They used to have a huge reunion at their house. The tradition was passed down to my dad and now to me.

Q: What's the best piece of advice you've ever received?

A: Don't do anything once that you don't want to do the rest of your married life. It was very good advice.

Q: What's one way you've stepped out of your comfort zone this year?

A: Taking a part time job with JCHD! I have never in my 40 years as a nurse worked with children. I am much more comfortable with giving immunizations to kiddos now, thanks to all my coworkers' help and advice. There's no better place to have your infants or children vaccinated.