



# MONONGALIA COUNTY DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION NEWSLETTER

## “CELEBRATIONS ALL OVER THE WORLD”



### December is Celebrations all over the world

*Monongalia County Schools is committed to providing a mutually respectful educational environment that is welcoming to all individuals from diverse backgrounds that promotes individual development, intellectual growth, and responsible citizenship*

When we hear the word celebration and the month of December, usually the first thought that comes to mind is Christmas. Yes, Christmas is a major holiday with over 90% of Americans reporting that they celebrate Christmas. While that may be the case there are many other celebrations that take place not only during the month of December, but throughout the year.

A celebration might include, a personal moment of pride or happiness, family gathering, party with friends, festival or large gathering, national holiday or feast, etc...

Celebrations look different across different cultures. Take Christmas for example. Christmas has a different meaning for different cultural groups. In America it is traditional to celebrate Christmas with Christmas lights, Christmas tree, cookies out for Santa, Christmas dinner etc.



Christmas dinners can look different across different cultures. It is common for Italian Americans to do a Christmas dinner of the Feast of Seven Fishes, compared to the turkey or ham dinner a majority of families do.

Studies show that cultural appreciation and awareness contribute to building a positive self-image. Developing a strong foundation of belonging and acceptance through cultural celebration and education helps children to create a diverse social network while transitioning into adulthood.

As a school system with many families from different backgrounds it is important for us to help our students learn that there are other traditions and celebrations than they are used to.

Understanding that people/families have different celebrations help our students learn to respect differences amongst each other. We may not all celebrate holidays the same way or have the same traditions, but we can all learn about others’ traditions and respect them.

### December Observations

- National Human Rights Month
- Human Rights Day- Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>

For questions or more information please contact:

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## IN THIS ISSUE

### PARENT CORNER

### WHAT IS MY SCHOOL DOING



PARENT CORNER

THE PARENT CORNER IS OPTIONAL READING FOR PARENTS THAT ARE LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES OR IDEAS AT HOME. MONONGALIA COUNTY SCHOOLS IN ONLY PROVIDING OPTIONAL RESOURCES AND RESPECTS EVERYONE’S DIFFERENCES.

With the holiday season coming it is important to remember that not everyone celebrates the same holidays. Many may celebrate the same holiday, but celebrate it in a different way.

These are tips that you can do at home to help teach your school-age child about different holidays.

- Learn about the holidays yourself! It can be intimidating to explain a new concept to your child when you don’t feel confident in the explanation. Take some time and do some research on different holidays. Ask yourself these questions as you are done some background work:
  - Why is this holiday celebrated?
  - What is the historical origin of the holiday?
  - What are the religious values, commercial or economic interests?
- Don’t just focus on the holidays, but think broader and talk about family traditions. Some families may not celebrate a holiday specifically, but have a family tradition they could share.
- Explore different cultures year-round. Holidays are one part of exploring other cultures, but incorporate year-round opportunities to learn about and explore other cultures. Think about how your child's cultural awareness and sensitivity is increased by learning this new information.

\*West Virginia University has a lot of different opportunities throughout the year that help bring awareness and exposure to different cultures and traditions\*

- Read children’s books about different holidays. Check out your local library for activities and books available

- Try food from different cultures that is used to celebrate during the holidays. Not sure where to start? Check out a multi-cultural cookbook or look for recipes on the internet. Talk about why specific foods are important and part of a holiday tradition.
- Visit cultural centers or museums and explore different holiday celebrations as it relates to that specific culture.
- Visit with people that celebrate different holidays.

Exploring different holiday traditions does not take away from a child’s own celebration, but instead helps them make the connection of similarities between what they practice and what others practice. It helps them understand and appreciate other cultures and points of view and can enhance their appreciation for their own traditions.

Preview to next Month

January is “Families come in different shapes and sizes”

This month will focus on how families can be made up of different people and sizes and showing respect for one another because of those differences.

January Observations

- No Name-Calling Week
- Korean American Day-January 13<sup>th</sup>
- National Religious Freedom Day-January 16<sup>th</sup>

*\*Please note that these are not all observations throughout the month. If any were missed that relates to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion it was not intentional\**





# What is being done at Morgantown High School?

## Foreign Languages Celebrate

"Italian II's & III's will be "cantiamo natalizi" or Christmas caroling to various classes throughout the month with our song "Rudolph da Naso Rosso!"

"German Three will make Krampus horns and visit select classrooms. Krampus is a horned figure, in Alpine folklore, who during the Christmas season scares children who have misbehaved, assisting Saint Nicholas"

## Performances

Band / Jazz Band / Percussion Ensembles will be performing our Annual Holiday Concert on Friday, 12/10 at 6:00 PM in the Main Gym!



The choir and orchestra concert is happening on December 14th at 7pm at the Met Theatre downtown. Tickets are \$7, but MHS students are free by showing their ID.



Artwork by Ayden Knaggs, MHS Junior.

## Fundraiser

Red and Blue Spectrum Club will be selling the "All Kinds are Welcome Here" stickers to help raise some funds for future club activities. They will be \$2 each and about 3.5" x 5". Students can stop by room 105 if interested in purchasing a sticker.

## Mexican Christmas Traditions

**Posada**  
Children participate in a Posada, like a parade and stop at friends and neighbors' houses, enacting the time when Joseph and Mary were looking for shelter for Mary to give birth. The children are told there is no room in the house and they must go away. Finally, they are told there is room and are welcomed into a home where they can say prayers and have a party with food and games. One of the games that is often played at the end of the Posada is a pinata.

**Christmas Eve**  
Christmas Eve is often called “Noche Buena ” (Good Night) and is a family day. They celebrate with the main Christmas meal which often consists of a thick soup called Pozole, which is made of hominy, pork and seasonings. Their meal may also include tamales, roast turkey and roast pork. Some of their Christmas cookies are called biscochitos. They are simple sugar cookies with anise seed added to them. They will often decorate with luminarias (paper bags filled with sand and a candle) leading the way for the shepherds. It is magical to see the towns lit up this way.

In Mexico, most people speak Spanish, so Happy/Merry Christmas is Felize Navidad. The largest Angel Ornament was made in Mexico. It was made in January 2001 by Sergio Rodriguez. It was 18’ 3” high and had a wingspan of 11’ 9”!

## Happy Hanukkah

Hanukkah began Sunday November 28th and ends December 6th!



## Holiday Angel Tree

This month, the MHS student council is hosting the Mohigans helping Mohigans Holiday Angel Tree. With the help of sponsors within the school and community, MHS will be assisting approximately 85 families with Christmas presents this year. Like Thanksgiving, the MHS counseling department has been working closely with outside agencies to provide a full holiday dinner as well. The student council and counseling department will be distributing holiday meals and presents to families on December 21<sup>st</sup>.