



February Newsletter

Changing Lives, One Day, One Goal,
One Person at a Time



How to Celebrate Black History Month with Kids

Believe it or not, Black History Month hasn't been around for long. Officially recognized by American presidents in the 1970's, some communities and individuals had been celebrating African American contributions to our society and the world as early as the 1920's, but because much of the 20th century was filled with racial prejudice and the Civil Rights Movement, country-wide recognition didn't happen until fairly recently.

Lonnie Bunch, Founding Director of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, said in his professional blog that "there is no more powerful force than a people steeped in their history", and that there is "no higher cause than honoring our struggle and ancestors by remembering." In his article, Bunch argues that Black History Month is just as important today as ever before because it preserves the memory of the past as well as the culture of an entire group of people. Moreover, it empowers members of that culture to retain their traditions while continuing to make a positive difference in the world.

Overall, teaching our children about Black History Month and about the many important African American influencers and contributors continues to move our society forward. Essentially, we are raising kids who will one day grow up and contribute to our society, hopefully in a positive way. By teaching them to respect the history, culture, and accomplishments of African Americans, they will be more aware and ultimately more tolerant of everyone within our highly diverse country.

It's important to remember that the following ideas can be done throughout the year, and not just in February! As Americans, we should work to honor their contributions all the time. Sometimes, however, it's important to take time out to focus and remember the purpose of doing that, which makes February a great time, too. Try the following ideas to reinforce Black History Month and its importance with your kids:

- Visit a local children's museum
- Study African American culture and recipes
- Study influential African Americans based on your child's own interest
- Participate in local kid-friendly events

Member Spotlight

WOC would like to recognize MaryJoyce Givan Lewis, a WOC member of five years. Mary J was born in Alabama and moved to Michigan in her early years. During her time as a student in the Saginaw Public School system, Mary J became a young mother at the age of 16. Dedicated to her studies, Mary J went on to finish school and even completed a year of college before working for Saginaw Public Schools for over 35 years. Mary J channeled her motherly love through her work in food service making sure that students had meals that they may not have had at home. In her free time Mary J enjoys spending time with her husband, five children, and seven grandchildren, as well as traveling and giving back to the community.

Mary J says she is blessed to be a member of WOC, but we believe we're blessed to have her! Thank you for your contributions to WOC and the Saginaw community. We appreciate you!



MaryJoyce Givan Lewis
WOC Member Since 2017



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3. Download free and stream the WOC Network!

STRONGER TOGETHER

Family & Friends: An Addiction Support Group

Is your loved one leading a destructive life? That doesn't mean your life has to be destroyed as well.

Stronger Together is here to help you cope. Join us at WOC for an addiction support group for family and friends of people struggling with addiction.

1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month. 6:30 - 8 PM
1000 Tuscola St Saginaw, MI 48607

President's Corner

Following the completion of the Racial Disparities in Behavioral Health Follow-Up Care Project in 2022, WOC is now focusing on potential solutions to the systemic issues that contribute to the barriers to healthcare in Saginaw County. Driven by a community-led understanding of necessary improvements, WOC plans to continue engaging with local stakeholders and community resources to make lasting change. With challenges like a lack of providers, limited insurance, unreasonable restrictions, uncoordinated delivery of services, and stigma, too many people suffer without primary care. To effectively treat individuals with complex healthcare needs, we must break down silos and integrate behavioral healthcare with primary care and other community-based supports. We hope that 2023 will give WOC and other community-led initiatives the opportunity to meet these goals and better serve the Saginaw community.



Evelyn McGovern
WOC Cofounder/President