



The Torch

Lighting the way for Diversity, Inclusion and Student Culture

May 2022 Issue | An Insight to Keep You in the Loop at EGCC

March is Women's History Month

EGCC Student Spotlight - Brittany Fears

Brittany Fears is the Interim Vice President for the EGCC Student Government Association and one of the founding members of the Black Student Union. She was born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky, while also spending time briefly in Detroit, Michigan. She studies Teacher Education at Eastern Gateway Community College and will be graduating in June 2022. Her goal is to earn her teacher certification and get her own classroom. She is currently a kindergarten instructional assistant and has been one for three years. Miss Fears is also a proud veteran of the Kentucky Army National Guard, where she served ten years before being honorably (medically) discharged. Miss Fears also served as a Senator for the inaugural Student Government Association here at Eastern Gateway and is a Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society member.



Miss Fears is the proud mother of a 10-year-old daughter, Brailyn, and is the Vice President of the Parent-Teacher Association at her daughter's school. In her free time, she likes to play basketball and football. She won an international championship in football in 2019, playing for the AFE Team USA All-Stars when they defeated Mexico. She also started an elementary ROTC drill team called the Falcon Drill Team at her job. She serves on the Players Advisory Council Leadership Team for the Women's Football Alliance. Miss Fears also helps coach youth basketball and soccer. Her career goals include making a positive impact on the youth and trying to leave the world a better place than how she found it. She counts her mother, grandmother, Malcolm X, Queen Latifah, and Oprah Winfrey as some of her biggest inspirations in life.



April is AUTISM AWARENESS month

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a developmental disorder that can impact an individual's communication skills, social skills, self-regulation skills, and relationship skills. A specific set of behaviors referred to as a spectrum condition defines Autism. Autism affects people differently and to various degrees. Autism often appears in those who have it during early childhood.



Autism Facts

- Autism Spectrum Disorder is reported to occur in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.
- Autism is almost five times more common among boys (one in 42) than among girls (one in 189).
- Children born to older parents are at a higher risk of autism spectrum disorder.
- On average, children identified with autism spectrum disorder were not diagnosed until after age 4, even though children can be diagnosed as early as 2.
- It is estimated to cost at least \$17,000 more per year to care for a child with autism spectrum disorder than it does to care for a child without the condition. Costs include health care, education, autism-related therapy, family-coordinated services, and caregiver time. For a child with more severe autism spectrum disorder, costs per year increase to over \$21,000.
- Children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorder had average medical expenditures that exceeded those without the disorder by \$4,110 to \$6,200 a year. On average, medical expenses for children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorder were 4.1 to 6.2 times greater than those without the condition.

Karla's Korner



Carley Schiffhauer

Meet Carley Schiffhauer

Carley shared with me a little about herself. She has Autism Asperger's Syndrome, which was reclassified as a level 1 autism spectrum disorder. If you look up Asperger's Syndrome (which is still the most used name in the autism community), you will find some very interesting characteristics of the disorder. These include that a person with this syndrome will have above average intelligence and strong verbal skills and yet find it challenging to socialize and communicate in certain social settings.

I had the pleasure of meeting Carley a few years ago, and I have been a huge fan of her positivity and overwhelming independence. She is the daughter of our Dean of Health Education, Gina Augustine, and is as nice and driven as her mother. Carley is nurturing and caring, and when I asked if I could do this spotlight on her as a student with Autism, she thought about it and agreed to share a little about her life.



I asked Carley to just tell me a little bit about herself and she gladly shared the following, "When I was little, I used to have meltdowns when I heard babies cry in restaurants (especially Drake's Landing), I try not to let things bother me as much anymore, and I ask people for advice when I'm upset."

I have been taking dance lessons for the last twelve years, and the dance studio is very supportive of me and always had an extra person practice the dance with me. By the time I was a Senior (in high school), I was able to do a ballet solo by myself.

When I feel like I need someone to talk to, there is a group of my mom's friends and I know I could reach out to any one of them. For any academic issues, I reach out to my wonderful tutor Cameron Bonds. I have friends at church, and it's very helpful for me to spend time with them."

Carley has excelled academically and is a great student. She is currently a college student and doing well. Carley has her own business as an Avon Representative. I know she is very successful and attentive to her clients because I happen to be one of her clients. She loves animals and lives on a farm with her parents. I am also friends with her mother, and when I met Carley for the first time, I had no idea that she was autistic - I thought that she was just quiet, extremely respectful, and friendly (which would be a given because her mother is one of the nicest people I know). To me, Carley is well adjusted and full of love. It has been a pleasure getting to know more about Carley, and I sincerely thank her for sharing with us.



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

MAY

MEET OUR YOUNGSTOWN CAMPUS Career Development Coordinator

Mental illnesses affect nearly one in five U.S. adults. Three out of four people with mental illness showed signs before they were 24 years old, proving mental health affects children and teens. In 2020, 52.9 MILLION people reported mental illness. Mental illness can range from mild to severe and have many different conditions.

The stigma of mental health/illness prevents people from being diagnosed. People experience self-doubt and shame from dealing with mental illness. Breaking the stigma can reduce suicide caused by mental illness and help those struggling with mental illness.

Ways to Fight Mental Health Stigma include:

- Talking openly about mental health
- Educating yourself and others
- Being concise in language
- Encouraging equality between physical and mental illness
- Showing compassion for those with mental illness
- Choosing empowerment
- Being honest about treatment

If you are dealing with mental illness, please reach out to Carissa Henry, EGCC's Licensed Psychologist/Counselor. Call 740-264-5591 Extension 1709 or email at chenry@egcc.edu

If you're thinking about harming yourself, get help immediately. You can call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Line at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Sources: [nph.nih.gov, mental.health.gov, nami.org](https://nph.nih.gov/mental-health.gov/nami.org)

JUNE IS LGBTQ+ & JUNETEENTH MONTH



The Importance of Recognition

It goes without saying that in life, we all have differences. These differences add to personal and cultural uniqueness. It becomes extremely important to celebrate those who are different than what society has captured as the norm because the reality is that the norm was placated on a false reality. The truthness of self-awareness and independent experiences will always be different from one to another. To give freedom to all persons to celebrate their love for one another is not something that should have ever been misguided by the falsehood of normalcy.

We at EGCC celebrate our LGBTQ+ community in a way that I hope becomes the absolute normality of society. We celebrate you by simply saying that your sense of self matters and you all are the truthness of society. Furthermore, we bring awareness to the strong data supporting the fact that chronic sadness, suicide, and poor academic performance happen at a high rate in this community due to bullying and invisibility. This leads this population of students to be underserved and misunderstood. Instead of letting history repeat itself, let's learn to celebrate the accomplishments of the LGBTQ+ community and continue to strengthen the love for one another. We are all made to love one another and not to judge one another. The perfect reality of that love may be farfetched with those that look to destroy our brothers - so I close in asking, if we only must answer for what we do wrong in life, does mistreating one another and sisters hurt them or you in the end?

Be kind, be aware, be great, be free, be the new normal, which is not very normal at all. It is called unique.

Karla Martin

JUNETEENTH

CELEBRATE FREEDOM JUNE 19

After the Civil War, General Granger arrived in Galveston, signaling the freedom for Texas's 250,000 enslaved people. The following year the freedmen in Texas organized the first "Jubilee Day" on June 19. In 1979, Texas became the first state to make Juneteenth an official holiday. Decades later, Juneteenth became a national holiday when President Biden signed it into law. Celebrations feature music, barbeques, prayer services, and other activities.

Source: [History.com](https://history.com)

July is French-American Heritage Month

If you are a student or employee and would like to highlight articles, culture, or cultural recipes for the upcoming months, please send them to diversityoffice@egcc.edu.

Diverse Awareness MONTH/DAY ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

March
 Greek-American Heritage Month
 Irish-American Heritage Month
 2/2 - Ash Wednesday
 2/8 - International Women's Day
 2/11 - World Day of Muslim Culture
 2/17 - St Patrick's Day

April
 Arab-American Heritage Month
 Scottish-American Heritage Month
 Celebrate Diversity Month
 2/2 - Autism Awareness Day
 2/2 - Ramadan Begins: Ramadan is a holy month of fasting, introspection, and prayer for Muslims, the followers of Islam.
 2/15 - Passover Begins
 2/17 - Easter
 2/21 - Festival of Ridván: The Festival of Ridván commemorates the 12 days when Bahá'ú'lláh, the prophet-founder, lived in paradise, which is called Ridván.

May
 National Asian-American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month
 Haitian Heritage Month
 Indian Heritage Month
 South Asian Heritage Month
 Jewish-American Heritage Month
 Speech and Hearing Awareness
 5/5 - Cinco de Mayo
 5/21 - World Day of Cultural Diversity
 5/30 - Memorial Day

June
 National Caribbean American Heritage Month
 6/8 - Race Unity Day
 6/21 - National Indigenous People's Day
 5/28 - LGBT Pride Day