



The Torch

Lighting the way for Diversity, Inclusion and Student Culture

October 2022 Issue | *Insight to Keep You in the Loop at EGCC*



• OCTOBER IS •
DOWN SYNDROME
— AWARENESS MONTH —

Down Syndrome Awareness

Classified by John Langdon Down in 1862, Down syndrome is a chromosomal condition that affects around 5.4 million individuals globally. There is 1 in 700 chance of a baby being born with Down Syndrome. The chance increase with the mother's age. The effects of down syndrome includes physical growth, intellectual disability and characteristic facial features.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4449492/>



Mental Health Awareness Week October 2nd

Many people prioritize their physical health, but mental health is equally important for one's wellbeing. Approximately 50% of Americans will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder at some point in their lives. According to World Health Organization, depression is one of the leading causes for disability and suicide is the second leading cause of death for 15-29-year-olds. Mental health affects all areas of life and should always be taken seriously.

This month, take some time to prioritize your mental health:

- Take care of your body: get enough sleep, eat right, and stay active.
- Connect with others: talk to trusted people in your life about how you are feeling.
- Take time to unwind: don't forget to do things you enjoy like reading a book, doing yoga, or other forms of self-care.

<https://br.uw.edu/492022/04/mental-health-awareness-month/>



HISTORY MONTH

LGBT month was created by Rodney Wilson in 1994. The General Assembly of the National Education Association passed a resolution to include LGBT History month within a list of months. October was chosen to coincide with National Coming Out Day (October 11), and the anniversary of the first march on Washington for gay and lesbian rights. We celebrate LGBT month to highlight the history and achievements of LGBT people.

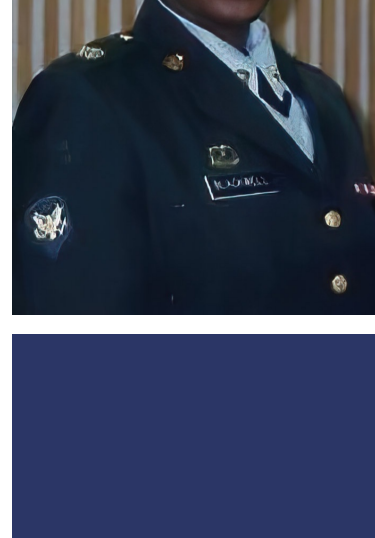
<https://www.glc.org/about-us/about-us-what-is-glc-what-is-glc-history-month-in-general/>



**NATIVE AMERICAN
HERITAGE MONTH**
••• November •••

The first American Indian Day in a state was declared by the governor of New York on the second Saturday in May 1916. Presently, several states have designated Columbus Day as Native American Day, but it continues to be a day we observe without any recognition as a national legal holiday. In 1990 President George H. W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November 1990 "National American Indian Heritage Month." Similar proclamations, under various names on the name (including "Native American Heritage Month" and "National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month") have been issued each year since 1994.

KARLA'S KORNER | VETERAN'S DAY



MEET RETIRED VETERAN Sergeant First Class, DeCarol (Dee) Blackwell

She served her country proudly for 14 years. She left the Army in 2009 after being stationed in Georgia, Korea and Kentucky. Dee is a part-time employee at Eastern Gateway and a perfect example of why we not only celebrate the sacrifices of the Veteran but those of their families as well.

When did you enter the Military? February 7th, 1995

What Branch? Army

Why? I was at a standstill in life. I wasn't sure what my next move would be, so I talked with a family member, my sister Rachelle, and we decided to join the military.

Give a briefing of the tours you did in the military. I was stationed at Ft. Gordon, GA for 4 years where I worked in the supply room of the training schools for a Signal Battalion. I then went to Korea for a year where I worked in the supply room for soldiers who worked with in processing new soldiers to Korea. After Korea I was stationed at Ft. Campbell, KY where I spent the last 9 years of my career. I worked in a headquarters supply room who supported the staff members of the unit. I also worked in the Battalion supply room who supported the entire battalion of soldiers. During my time at Ft. Campbell, I deployed to Iraq twice, once in 2003 and then in 2005. I was in Iraq for 12 months both times supporting my unit in the supply field.

What is one of the greatest experiences in the Military? The greatest experience was everything. Meeting new people, some who are still my friends to this day. Being able to travel to different places in the world. I loved my supply chain job; it was very fulfilling. My greatest joy came from my time in the military and that is my son Michael Rollins.

What is one of the scariest experiences in the Military? Deploying to Iraq. I was afraid to go to war and to leave my son. It was a very hard time for me both times. You just never know what will happen and my thoughts were always about my son being without me.

When you went into the military did you realize what serving your country really meant? No, not at all. I was very naive. I just saw this as a job opportunity like any other job. It wasn't until 9/11 happened that I really felt what it was to serve my country and the freedoms of the people. It is for everyone to be able to protest by kneeling during the national anthem or in any other peaceful way. We cannot pick and choose what freedoms are allowed, as long as you are not doing any harm to your fellow American then I do not see a problem.

Do you consider yourself a Hero? I do not consider myself a hero. I do feel very accomplished being able to serve my country in such a way. Being in the military is such an honor and I will forever be grateful for the opportunity I was given.

How do you feel about freedom, for instance kneeling at pledge or burning the flag? I ask because I once heard a Veteran say he did not mind because he fought so that people could kneel and have the freedoms that people in other countries do not dare to even comprehend. I feel that freedom is freedom and military soldiers fight for those freedoms of all people. Those freedoms include being able to protest by my kneeling during the national anthem or in any other peaceful way. We cannot pick and choose what freedoms are allowed, as long as you are not doing any harm to your fellow American then I do not see a problem at all.

As a female, black woman, was your experience hard and if so, what advice would you give to the younger you in the military? Overall, my experience was good. There are issues for women in the military like having a child especially being a single parent. It was hard for me to find daycare that would work with my schedule in the military, having to be ready for anything at any time. I do not feel that as a black woman that I was ever discriminated against. As a woman I do feel like life was harder because it was a man's world and sometimes you bump into men who do not think you belong or men who think you are there for other activities. The advice I would give to the younger generation is stay focused on your goals. Military life can sometimes be like college, and you may lose yourself with all the partying but if you remain solid to yourself then great things can and will happen for you.

All in all, was the military good for you? Turns out it was the best decision I ever made. It wasn't always easy or fast, but I did my best and came out on top. I would not change anything about my choice to join the military.

In the interview Dee does not call herself a Hero, but here at EGCC we consider all people who serve this country Heroic. Thank you all for your service and we thank your families for their sacrifices.



Holiday Traditions

Christian Celebrations: The most known holiday tradition is Christmas – religious and secular. The religious meaning of Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus, who Christians believe is the Son of God. The secular meaning of Christmas is celebrated with Christmas trees, presents, Santa Clause, and dreams of snowy landscapes. This holiday is celebrated by many Americans no matter their culture.

Latino Celebrations: American Latinos celebrate the Christmas season by beginning with the Celebration of the Virgen de Guadalupe. This celebration is a nine-day novena that starts December 3rd and concludes on the Virgen's Feast Day December 12th. Starting December 16th and going through until December 24th Latinos celebrate Las Posadas. This tradition was started by Spanish Priests to teach indigenous Americans about Christianity. During Las Posadas, children reenact the Story of Mary and Joseph.

African Celebrations: Kwanzaa is a seven-day celebration of African American heritage and culture. It begins December 26th and ends January 1st. For seven nights families gather around a Kinara and light one candle each night while discussing one of the seven principles.

Jewish Celebrations: Hanukkah is celebrated by Jewish Americans. This is an eight-day celebration that commemorates the rededication of the temple by the Maccabees after their victory over the Syrians. Hanukkah is celebrated by lighting candles on a special candelabra called a menorah. Each night one candle is lit. Doing this symbolizes the number of days that the Temple Lantern blazed.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF
**PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES**
• DECEMBER 03 •

International Disabilities day is December 3rd. This day was created to help people understand the challenges people with disabilities face. This day does not discriminate between physical and mental disabilities. Celebrating this day ensures people with disabilities have equal opportunities for work, play, health, and success. During this day, especially with the current times we're facing we want to acknowledge those who have disability and are out on the front lines providing people with services needed. Thank you!

<https://www.egcc.edu/institutional-diversity/diversity-day/>



DECEMBER 10
**HUMAN
RIGHTS
DAY**

National Human Rights day was created on December 10, 1948. Adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights occurred on this day. National Human Rights Day celebrates the rights of every individual everywhere, no matter their nationality, place of residence, gender, national or ethnic origin, religion, language, or any other status. When the General Assembly adopted the Declaration, it was proclaimed as a "common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations" (ohchr.org). The popularity of National Human Rights day rose when the commemorative stamp was issued by the United Nations Postal Administration in 1952.

<https://www.egcc.edu/institutional-diversity/diversity-day/>

New Release Dates for Office of Institutional Diversity Newsletter

Going forward The Office of Institutional Diversity will be releasing newsletters quarterly in the following months: January, April, July and October. Please see below for which months are covered in each newsletter.

- January:** January, February, March
- April:** April, May, June
- July:** July, August, September
- October:** October, November, December

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