

# We Embrace

Spreading awareness of diversity-related issues while promoting inclusion of our diverse faculty, trainers and staff.

A monthly newsletter from the Diversity and Inclusion Committee | Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health | October 2021



## Let's Celebrate!

*Submitted by Crista Maracic, PhD*

### Indigenous People's Day



(Foxworth, 2019)

October is a time for celebration, and not just because of Halloween. On October 11, several States celebrate Indigenous People's Day, a holiday honoring Native American peoples and their histories and cultures. Before European settlers discovered land across the Atlantic Ocean, there were Native Americans with their own culture and collective contributions. As early as the fifteenth century, there is recorded history of over 1,500

wars, attacks and raids on American Indians. These events do not include the Trail of Tears, a forced displacement of tens of thousands of indigenous peoples in 1831. According to the Director of the American Indian Studies Center at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma tribal citizen, Dr. Shannon Speed, PhD, over 10 million Native Americans were adversely affected by European colonization (Little, 2020). •

## Italian Heritage Day (formerly known as Columbus Day)



*(Senator John Heinz History Center, 2015)*

Since 1937, Columbus Day has been celebrated as a national holiday in the U.S. And since 1971, it has been celebrated on the second Monday of October. As historians have continued to dig into the life of Christopher Columbus, controversy has arisen over continuing to honor the Italian explorer as a hero. This is due to his use of brutal violence toward the indigenous people that he and his crew encountered and enslaved upon arrival on the shores of what are now known as the continents of North and South America. This controversy dates back to the 19th century when anti-immigration groups in the U.S. rejected the holiday because of its association with Catholicism. At the height of Italian

immigration, around the turn of the 20th century, Italian immigrants helped provide the labor for American factories and mines and helped build roads, dams, tunnels, and other infrastructure. Overcoming oppression and hardships and while facing anti-Italian prejudice and violence, their work provided them a small economic foothold in American society and allowed them to provide for their families, which stood at the core of Italian-American life. As an alternative to celebrating and naming a holiday after the controversial Italian explorer Columbus, several states instead now celebrate the historic contributions that Italians have made to the social, economic, scientific, cultural and political fabric of our country. •



## National Coming Out Day



*(Strapagiel, 2018)*

There is another reason to celebrate on October 11 – National Coming Out Day! This is a time to support the LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning and others) community and celebrate their equality under the law. National Coming Out Day represents the brave decision to honor oneself by sharing with family, friends and the world one's authentic identity. The annual holiday was founded in 1988 by the psychologist, Richard Eichberg, PhD, and lesbian and gay rights activist, Jean O'Leary, who sought to bring awareness to the LGBTQ+ community and

its civil rights movement. October 11 was chosen in memoriam of "The Great March" on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights in 1987 (Nationaltoday.com). We celebrate National Coming Out Day because heteronormative and cisgender assumptions continue to dominate society. This day symbolizes the progress that has been made in recognizing the equality of rights among the LGBTQ+ community. It also reminds us of the work that still needs to be done to become aware, challenge, and resolve our implicit biases. •

## Chinese National Day

Beginning on October 1 and lasting until October 7, Chinese National Day is celebrated throughout mainland China. This holiday recognizes the founding of the People's Republic of China, which was established in 1949 (Nationaltoday.com). This holiday symbolizes the fall of monarchy and the rise of democracy for modern China. During this time, the Chinese government celebrates the country's independence by hosting various festivities in public spaces. Cultural events include fireworks and savory treats for family, friends, and travelers to enjoy.

October is certainly a time to celebrate, and we hope that all who will be celebrating the abovementioned holidays enjoy safely. Remember to follow CDC guidelines for best practices, including implementing social distancing when



(Chinese Language Institute [CLI], 2021)

possible, wearing face coverings indoors and in large social gatherings, and getting vaccinated. To make gatherings even safer, consider hosting events outdoors or making them virtual (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2021). •

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## Spotlight On

### Crista Maracic, PhD



Crista Maracic, PhD, is a clinical psychologist in the Division of Addiction Psychiatry at Stony Brook Medicine. She provides individual and group therapy to people diagnosed with substance use disorder and other comorbid conditions. Dr. Maracic has a passion for getting to the root of the addiction problem, which for many, starts with trauma. Dr. Maracic enjoys learning about trauma-informed inclusive care and sharing this knowledge with staff and trainees. She works to support Stony Brook as a trauma-informed organization and promotes building a trauma-informed workforce. Dr. Maracic actively seeks to provide trauma-sensitive and specific services to disadvantaged groups with a particular interest in working with military service members and veterans. Outside of work, Dr. Maracic enjoys being outdoors, practicing yoga and indulging in dark chocolate.



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Learn more about how we are promoting and maintaining a culture of diversity and inclusion at:  
[stonybrookmedicine.edu/diversity-committee](https://stonybrookmedicine.edu/diversity-committee)