Albany Damien Center

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Committee Newsletter

Summer 2026

As June comes to an end, we say goodbye to a busy **Pride Month** and look forward to the rest of Summer! This July celebrates the United States' 250th anniversary of independence, and BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month.

Observed every July, **BIPOC Mental Health Month** (also known as Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month) honors the author, teacher, and advocate who dedicated her life to erasing mental health stigma in underrepresented communities. It highlights the unique challenges, historical traumas, and systemic barriers communities of color.

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or text **988** (available 24/7, free, and confidential) to speak with trained counselors. **The Trevor Project:** Call **1-866-488-7386** or text "START" to **678-678** for 24/7 crisis and suicide prevention for LGBTQ+ youth.

Did you know?

August is **National Civility Awareness Month**. Established in 2014, National Civility Month was created to promote empathy and encourage respectful communication and consideration of others regardless of background.

At a time when our country is growing more politically divided, civility seems to be declining in everyday society, which makes practicing it so important. Being civil goes beyond basic politeness - to actively show respect for others, fostering community and ensuring equal standing.

As you go through your day, try to remember to treat people the way you want to be treated. Make an effort to greet strangers and perform random acts of kindness. Focus on building up a society for **everyone**, establishing community over chaos.

A Note from…

"It always starts with an attack on one vulnerable group that doesn't have the institutional power to defend itself, but it never stops there. None of us are safe or free until all of us are."

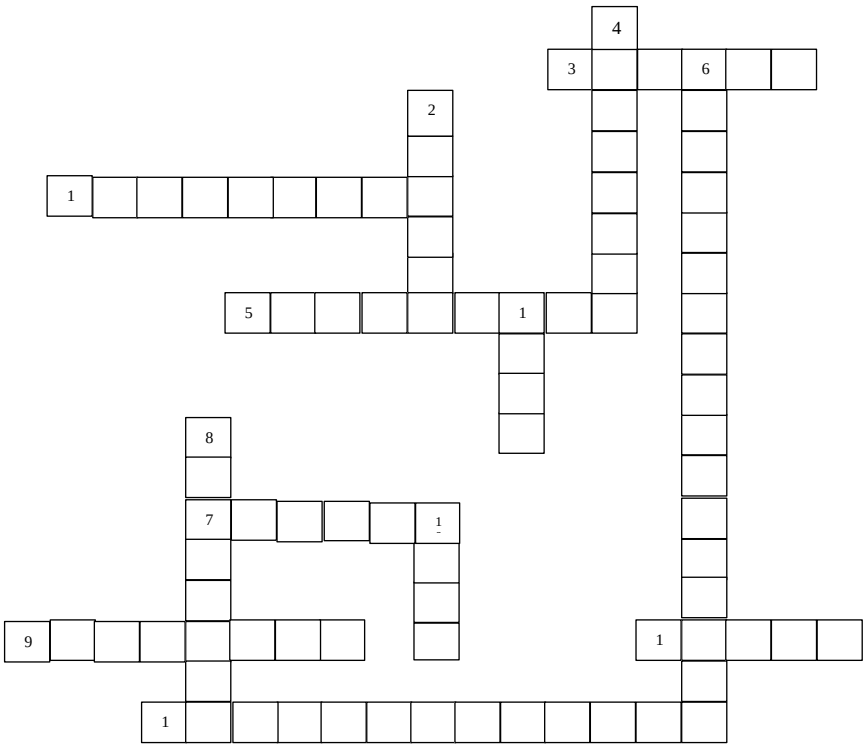
- Sylvia Rivera, quote from her 1973 "Y'all Better Quiet Down" speech in Washington Square Park in NYC

Diversity Calendar:

June:
Pride Month
June 19 – US: Juneteenth
Commemorates the end of slavery in the United States, marking the 1865 announcement of freedom in Texas.

July:
July 14 – LGBTQ+: International Non-Binary People's Day
Raises awareness of non-binary identities worldwide.

August:
August 9 – UN: International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
Recognizes the rights, histories, and contributions of Indigenous communities worldwide.



Activity:

Across

1. Practice or policy of providing equal access, opportunities, and resources for everyone
3. Principle of allocating resources, opportunities, and fair treatment based on individual needs rather than treating everyone identically
5. Presence of a wide variety of human identities and backgrounds within a group, community, or society
7. Negative stereotypes, prejudice, and discriminatory behaviors directed at marginalized individuals by the public or peers
9. Political, economic, cultural, or social dominance and control exercised by one group, state, or entity over others
11. Black, Indigenous, People of Color
13. Practice of removing barriers so that all individuals can equitably engage with services

Down

2. Behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex
4. State or quality of being fair, possessing the same rights, privileges, and opportunities without discrimination.
6. An analytical framework explaining how different personal characteristics—like race, gender, class, and sexuality—overlap
8. Affecting or relating to an entire whole rather than just an isolated part
10. Person or group that unites with another to aid, support, or cooperation
12. Suffix used to form nouns representing a distinctive practice, doctrine, system, or philosophy

What and who is the DEI Committee?

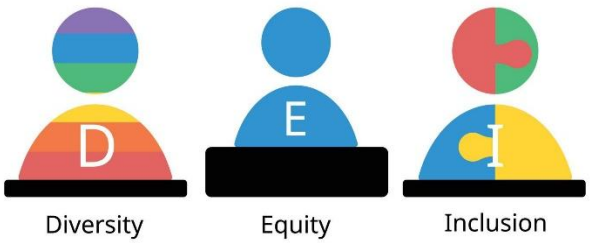
DIVERSITY EQUITY INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Mission:

To improve diversity, inclusion, equality and understanding by promoting dialogue, providing information, and fostering respect for all staff, tenants, and members.

The DEI Committee is currently made up of six employees and one board member. If you have interest in being a member, please contact any member of the committee.

How can I get involved? Have ideas related to DEI? Let us know! There is a DEI Suggestion box on 1A.



Name	Department/Title
Andrew Earle	Peer Navigator
Avery Crawford	Senior Accountant
Chris Tarnowski	Associate Executive Director
Jay Fields	Employment Advocate
Marz Albarran	Board Member
Marcus May	Peer Navigator
Ryan Ramdass	LGBT Health Navigator