

# WEYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS CULTURAL CALENDAR

As an increasingly diverse school district, the Weymouth Public Schools celebrates the many cultures represented among our families and staff. This cultural calendar is provided to increase awareness among students, staff, and families of the significant holidays celebrated in our community. This calendar is a living, inclusive document and we invite HPS community members to let us know of additional holidays or celebrations we may have overlooked. While many of these holidays fall on days that school is in session, students who celebrate these holidays have an excused absence from school. Additionally, we hope that staff and our PTOs will utilize this calendar to avoid scheduling events, such as PTO sponsored activities, tests/exams, field trips, assemblies, auditions, tryouts, and classroom celebrations on these days.

## Section 1: Overview of Major Holidays

HOLIDAY/OBSERVANCE	2023-2024
<b>Labor Day***</b>	Monday, September 4
Rosh Hashanah*	Friday, September 15 - Sunday, September 17
Yom Kippur*	Sunday, September 24 - Monday, September 25
Sukkot	Friday, September 29 - Friday October 6
<b>Columbus Day/Indigenous People's Day</b>	Monday, October 9
Diwali	Sunday, November 12
<b>Veteran's Day</b>	Friday November 10
<b>Thanksgiving</b>	Thursday, November 23
Chanukah*	Thursday, December 5- Friday, December 15
<b>Christmas Day</b>	Saturday, December 25
Kwanzaa	Monday, December 26- Sunday, January 1, 2024
<b>New Year's Day</b>	Monday January 1
<b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</b>	Monday, January 15
Lunar New Year (Chinese New Year)	Saturday, February 10
<b>President's Day</b>	Monday, February 19
Ash Wednesday	Wednesday, February 14
Palm Sunday	Sunday, March 24

<b>Good Friday</b>	Friday, March 29
Passover*	Monday, April 22 - Tuesday, April 30
Easter Sunday	Sunday, March 31
Orthodox Good Friday	Friday, May 3
Orthodox Easter Sunday	Sunday, May 5
<b>Patriots' Day</b>	Monday, April 15
Ramadan**	Sunday, March 10 - Monday, April 8
Shavuot*	Tuesday, June 11 - Thursday, June 18
Eid al-Fitr**	Tuesday, April 9 - Wednesday, April 10
<b>Memorial Day</b>	Monday, May 27
<b>Juneteenth</b>	Wednesday, June 19
<b>Independence Day</b>	Thursday, July 4
Eid al-Adha**	Sunday, June 16 - Monday, June 17

\*All Jewish observances begin at sundown on the evening prior to the day of the observance.

\*\*Due to the Lunar Calendar, these are only approximate dates.

\*\*Ramadan is a holy month that involves abstaining from food and drink from sunrise until sunset.. Please be mindful of food related activities or vigorous activity for students who are observing Ramadan fast.

\*\*\*Holiday Observances in Massachusetts (school holidays are in bold).

## Section 2: Comprehensive List of Cultural and Religious Holidays

### August

**July 27-28:** (sundown to sundown): Ashura, an Islamic holiday commemorating the day Noah left the ark and the day Allah saved Moses from the Egyptians, spoke to Prophet Musa and gave him the Commandments, Pharaoh's army was destroyed.

**August 13 - 15:** Obon (Ullambana), a Buddhist festival and Japanese custom for honoring the spirits of ancestors. It has evolved into a family reunion holiday during which people return to ancestral family places and visit and clean their ancestors' graves when the spirits of ancestors are supposed to revisit the household altars. It has been celebrated in Japan for more than 500 years and traditionally includes a dance, known as Bon Odori.

**August 30:** Raksha Bandhan, a Hindu holiday celebrating the bond between a brother and sister. "Raksha" means "protection" in Hindi and symbolizes the beauty of such a formative relationship. During the celebration, a sister ties a string around her brother's (or brother-figure's) wrist and prays for his good health. The brother usually gives the sister a gift and they share a vow to protect each other.

**August 30:** Hungry Ghost Festival, a Chinese holiday where street, market, and temple ceremonies take place to honor dead ancestors and appease other spirits.

**August 15:** Dormition of the Theotokos, a Great Feast of the Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches that commemorates the "falling asleep," or death, of Mary the Theotokos ("Mother of God") and her bodily resurrection before ascending into heaven.

### September

Hispanic Heritage Month is observed from September 15 to October 15. This month corresponds with Mexican Independence Day, which is celebrated on September 16, and recognizes the revolution in 1810 that ended Spanish dictatorship.

**September 4:** Labor Day, observed the first Monday in September. Labor Day is the annual celebration of the social and economic achievements of American Workers.

**September 6-7:** Krishna Janmashtami, a Hindu celebration of Lord Vishnu's most powerful human incarnations, Krishna, the God of love and compassion. Celebrations include praying and fasting.

**September 11-18:** Paryushana Parva, a Jain festival lasting about eight to ten days that is observed through meditation and fasting. Its main focus is spiritual upliftment, pursuit of salvation and a deeper understanding of the religion.

**September 14:** Elevation of the Life Giving Cross (Holy Cross), a day that commemorates the cross used in the Crucifixion of Jesus in some Christian denominations.

**September 15-17 (sundown to sundown):** Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year celebration, marking the creation of the world.

**September 19:** Ganesh Chaturthi, a Hindu holiday lasting around 10 days, where Ganpati is praised and given offerings.

**September 24 - 25 (sundown to sundown):** Yom Kippur, the holiest day on the Jewish calendar, a day of atonement marked by fasting and ceremonial repentance.

**September 26-27 (sundown to sundown):** Eid Milad un-Nabi, an Islamic holiday commemorating the birthday of the prophet Muhammad. During this celebration, homes and

mosques are decorated, large parades take place, and those observing the holiday participate in charity events.

**September 27:** Mawlid Al-Nabi, the observance of the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, celebrated during the month of Rabiulawal, the third month of the Muslim calendar. Shi'a Muslims celebrate it five days later than Sunni Muslims.

**September 28-30:** Chuseok, also known as Hangawi, a mid-autumn harvest festival and one of the biggest traditional Korean holidays.

**September 29- October 6:** Sukkot, a seven-day Jewish festival giving thanks for the fall harvest.

**September 29:** Michaelmas, or the Feast of Michael and All Angels, is a minor Christian festival dedicated to Archangel Michael that is observed in some Western liturgical calendars.

## October

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The annual event draws attention to employment barriers that still need to be addressed.

October is LGBT History Month.

October is Global Diversity Awareness Month, a month to celebrate and increase awareness about the diversity of cultures and ethnicities and the positive impact diversity can have on society.

**October 1:** Blessing of the Animals, in congruence with St. Francis Day. Many Unitarian Universalists have picked up on the Catholic tradition of blessing animals, particularly pets, as St. Francis was known for his special connection to animals.

**October 4:** St. Francis Day, feast day for St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals and the environment, celebrated by many Catholic denominations.

**October 6 - 8 (sundown to sundown):** Shemini Atzeret, a Jewish holiday also known as The Eighth (Day) of Assembly, takes place the day after the Sukkot festival, where gratitude for the fall harvest is deeply internalized.

**October 7 - 8 (sundown to sundown):** Simchat Torah, a Jewish holiday, marks the end of the weekly readings of the Torah. The holy book is read from chapter one of Genesis to Deuteronomy 34 and then back to chapter one again, in acknowledgement of the words of the Torah being a circle, a never-ending cycle.

**October 10:** National Indigenous Peoples Day, an alternative celebration to Columbus Day, gives recognition to the indigenous populations affected by colonization

**October 10:** World Mental Health Day. First celebrated in 1993, this day is meant to increase public awareness about the importance of mental health, mental health services, and mental health workers worldwide.

**October 11:** National Coming Out Day (U.S.). For those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, this day celebrates coming out and the recognition of the 1987 march on Washington for gay and lesbian equality.

**October 15-24:** Navaratri, the nine-day dance festival celebrating the triumph of good over evil. It worships God in the form of the universal mother commonly referred to as Durga, Devi or Shakti, and marks the start of fall.

**October 16-17:** The Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, a Bahá'í holiday celebrating the birth of the founder of the Bahá'í Faith.

**October 24:** Dasara, Dussehra, or Vijayadashami, in the eastern and northeastern states of India, marks the end of Durga Puja, remembering goddess Durga's victory over the buffalo

demon Mahishasura to help restore dharma.

**October 28:** Sharad Purnima is a harvest festival celebrated on the full moon day of the Hindu lunar month of Ashvin, marking the end of the monsoon season. On this auspicious day, many divine pairs like Radha-Krishna, Shiva-Parvati, and Lakshmi-Narayan are worshipped along with the moon and are offered flowers and kheer.

**October 31:** All Hallows' Eve (Halloween), a celebration observed in a number of countries on the eve of the Western Christian feast of All Hallows' Day. It begins the three-day observance of Allhallowtide, the time in the liturgical year dedicated to remembering the dead, including saints (hallows), martyrs and all the faithful departed.

**October 31:** Reformation Day, a Protestant Christian religious holiday celebrated alongside All Hallows' Eve (Halloween) during the triduum of Allhallowtide in remembrance of the onset of the Reformation.

## November

November is National Native American Heritage Month, which celebrates the history and contributions of Native Americans.

November is National Family Caregivers Month. It honors the more than 40 million caregivers across the country who support aging parents, ill spouses or other loved ones with disabilities who remain at home.

**November 1:** All Saints' Day, a Christian holiday commemorating all known and unknown Christian saints. (In Eastern Christianity, the day is observed on the first Sunday after Pentecost.)

**November 2:** All Souls' Day, a Christian holiday commemorating all faithful Christians who are now dead. In the Mexican tradition, the holiday is celebrated as Dia de los Muertos (October 31-November 2), which is a time of remembrance for dead ancestors and a celebration of the continuity of life.

**November 11:** Veterans Day, is a holiday in the US observed annually, for honoring military veterans, who are people that have served in the United States Armed Forces and are now discharged. Observance of this holiday includes two minutes of silence at 2:11 PM EST.

**November 12:** Diwali, the Hindu, Jain and Sikh five-day festival of lights celebrates new beginnings and the triumph of good over evil and lightness over darkness.

**November 20:** Transgender Day of Remembrance.

**November 23:** Thanksgiving, originally a harvest festival, the centerpiece of celebrations remains Thanksgiving Dinner. The dinner traditionally consists of foods and dishes indigenous to the Americas, namely, turkey, potatoes, stuffing, squash, corn, green beans, cranberries, and pumpkin pie.

**November 24:** Native American Heritage Day, held annually the Friday after Thanksgiving, encourages Americans of all backgrounds to observe and honor Native Americans through appropriate ceremonies and activities.

**November 26:** Feast of Christ the King, a Catholic holiday established in thanking God for the gift of time and a rededication to the Christian faith.

**November 25-26:** Day of the Covenant, a Bahá'í holiday celebrating the appointment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant.

**November 27 - November 28:** Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a Bahá'í holiday commemorating the passing of the son of the founder of the Bahá'í Faith.

**November 30:** St. Andrew's Day, the feast day for St. Andrew within various Christian denominations.

## December

**December 8:** Immaculate Conception of Mary, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception celebrates the solemn celebration, by various Christian denominations, of belief in the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

**December 8:** Bodhi Day, the Buddhist holiday that commemorates the day that the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama (Shakyamuni), experienced enlightenment, also known as bodhi in Sanskrit and Pali.

**December 10:** International Human Rights Day, established by the United Nations in 1948 to commemorate the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

**December 12:** Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, a religious holiday in Mexico commemorating the appearance of the Virgin Mary near Mexico City in 1531.

**Dumber 7 - December 15:** Hanukkah, a Jewish holiday that is celebrated around the world for eight days and nights. Hanukkah celebrates the victory of the Maccabees, or Israelites, over the Greek-Syrian ruler, Antiochus, approximately 2,200 years ago.

**December 25:** Christmas Day, the day that many Christians associate with Jesus' birth.

**December 26-January 1:** Kwanzaa, an African-American holiday started by Maulana Karenga in 1966 to celebrate universal African-American heritage.

**December 26:** Zartosht No-Diso (Death of Prophet Zarathushtra), a day of remembrance in the Zoroastrian religion. It is a commemoration of the death anniversary of the prophet Zoroaster, or Zarathushtra.

**December 26:** St. Stephen's Day, a day to commemorate St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, or protomartyr.

**December 28:** Feast of the Holy Innocents, a Christian feast in remembrance of the massacre of young children in Bethlehem by King Herod the Great in his attempt to kill the infant Jesus.

**December 31:** Feast of the Holy Family, a liturgical celebration in the Catholic Church in honor of Jesus, his mother and his foster father, St. Joseph as a family. The primary purpose of this feast is to present the Holy Family as a model for Christian families.

**December 31:** Watch Night, a day for Christians to review the year that has passed, make confessions, and then prepare for the year ahead by praying and resolving.

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## January

**January 1:** New Year's Day

**January 2:** Feast Day of St. Basil, a holiday observed by the Eastern Orthodox Church, commemorating the death of Saint Basil the Great.

**January 3:** Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, which is celebrated in the Roman Catholic Church, commemorates the naming of the child Jesus.

**January 4:** World Braille Day, observed in order to raise awareness of the importance of braille as a means of communication in the full realization of the human rights for blind and partially sighted people. It is celebrated on Louis Braille's birthday, the inventor of braille.

**January 7:** Christmas, recognized on this day by Eastern Orthodox Christians, who celebrate Christmas 13 days later than other Christian churches because they follow the Julian calendar rather than the Gregorian version of the Western calendar.

**January 13:** Lori-Maghi, an annual festival celebrated by the Sikhs commemorating the memory of 40 Sikh martyrs.

**January 15:** Makar Sankranti, a major harvest festival celebrating the end of winter also known as Uttarayan. Among the many traditions, kite flying is one of the most fun. Contests ensue to try and cut each other's kite strings.

**January 15:** Martin Luther King Jr. Day, observed on the 3rd Monday of January each year. King's actual birthday is January 15. Since 1994, the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency which provides grants to organizations that coordinate service activities on MLK Day.

**January 17:** Guru Gobind Singh Ji's birthday, the Tenth Guru of the Sikhs who initiated the Sikhs as the Khalsa (the pure ones) and is known as the Father of the Khalsa.

**January 24-25 (sundown to sundown):** Tu B'shevat or Rosh HaShanah La'llanot, a Jewish holiday recognizing "The New Year of the Trees." It is celebrated on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Shevat. In Israel, the flowering of the almond tree usually coincides with this holiday, which is observed by planting trees and eating dried fruits and nuts.

**February 14:** Vasant Panchami, the Hindu festival that highlights the coming of spring. On this day Hindus worship Saraswati Devi, the goddess of wisdom, knowledge, music, art, and culture.

**January 27 (sundown to sundown):** Holocaust Remembrance Day, a time to mourn the loss of lives, celebrate those who saved them, honor those who survived, and contemplate the obligations of the living. The anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp in 1945 and U.N. Holocaust Memorial Day.

**February 5:** St. Brigid of Kildare, feast day for St. Brigid celebrated by some Christian denominations.

## February

February is Black History Month in the United States. Since 1976, the month has been designated to remember the contributions of people of the African diaspora.

**February 1:** National Freedom Day, which celebrates the signing of the 13th Amendment that abolished slavery in 1865.

**February 2:** Candlemas – A Christian holiday that celebrates three occasions according to Christian belief: the presentation of the child Jesus; Jesus' first entry into the temple; and Virgin Mary's purification.

**February 3:** St. Blaise Day (The Blessing of the Throats), the feast day of St. Blaise of Sebaste celebrated by the Roman Catholic Church and some Eastern Catholic churches.

**February 3:** Setsubun-Sai (Beginning of Spring), the day before the beginning of spring in Japan, celebrated yearly as part of the Spring Festival.

**February 3:** Four Chaplains Day commemorates the 55th anniversary of the sinking of the United States army transport Dorchester and the heroism of the four chaplains aboard.

**February 10:** Lunar New Year, one of the most sacred of all traditional Chinese holidays, a time of family reunion and celebration. The Lunar New Year is also celebrated in China, Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia and Mongolia to name a few countries.

**February 14:** Ash Wednesday, Ash Wednesday is celebrated on Wednesday seven weeks before Easter and the day after [Mardi Gras](#) also referred to as Fat Tuesday. This is a Christian observance which represents the first day of Lent and the starting of approximately 6 weeks of fasting and penance.

**February 14:** St. Valentine's Day, a Western Christian feast day honoring one or two early saints named Valentinus. This day is typically associated with romantic love and celebrated by

people expressing their love via gifts.

**February 15:** Parinirvana Day (or Nirvana Day), the commemoration of Buddha's death at the age of 80, when he reached the zenith of Nirvana. February 8 is an alternative date of observance.

**February 6-7:** Lailat al Miraj, a Muslim holiday that commemorates the Prophet Muhammad's miraculous nighttime journey from Mecca to the "Farthest Mosque" in Jerusalem, where he ascended to heaven, was purified, and given the instruction for Muslims to pray five times daily. Note that in the Muslim calendar, a holiday begins on the sunset of the previous day.

**February 20:** Presidents' Day, celebrated the third Monday in February, popularly recognized as honoring George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. The day is sometimes understood as a celebration of the birthdays and lives of all US presidents.

**February 21:** Mardi Gras, or Shrove Tuesday the last day for Catholics to indulge before Ash Wednesday starts the sober weeks of fasting that accompany Lent. The term "Mardi Gras" is particularly associated with the carnival celebrations in New Orleans, Louisiana.

**February 22:** Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent on the Christian calendar. Its name is derived from the symbolic use of ashes to signify penitence. It takes place immediately after the excesses of the two days of Carnival that take place in Northern Europe and parts of Latin America and the Caribbean.

**February 24:** Lantern Festival, the first significant feast after the Chinese New Year, named for watching Chinese lanterns illuminate the sky during the night of the event.

**February 24:** Magha Puja Day (also known as Maka Bucha), a Buddhist holiday that marks an event early in the Buddha's teaching life when a group of 1,250 enlightened saints, ordained by the Buddha, gathered to pay their respect to him. It is celebrated on various dates in different countries.

**February 25- March 1:** Intercalary Days or Ayyám-i-Há, celebrated by people of the Bahá'í faith. Celebrated with gift giving, special acts of charity, and preparation for the fasting that precedes the New Year. A nineteen-Day fast follows, a time in the Bahá'í Faith to reinvigorate the soul and bring one closer to God. This fast takes place immediately before the beginning of the Bahá'í New Year.

## March

March is Women's History Month which recognizes all women for their valuable contributions to history and society. March is National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, which was established to increase awareness and understanding of issues affecting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. March is National Multiple Sclerosis Education and Awareness Month. It was established to raise public awareness of the autoimmune disease that affects the brain and spinal cord and assist those with multiple sclerosis in making informed decisions about their health care. March is Irish-American Heritage month.

**March 1:** St. David's Day, the feast day of St. David, the patron saint of Wales.

**March 6 (sunset) to March 7 (sunset):** Purim, a Jewish celebration that marks the time when the Jewish community living in Persia was saved from genocide. On Purim, Jewish people offer charity and share food with friends.

**March 7-8:** Lailat al Bara'a, also known as Lailat Al Baraah, Barat, or popularly as Shab-e-Bara or Night of Forgiveness. It is an Islamic holiday during which practitioners of the faith seek forgiveness for sins. Muslims spend the night in special prayers. It is regarded as one of the most sacred nights on the Islamic calendar.



**March 8:** Maha Shivarati, Hindu festival celebrated each year to honor Lord Shiva. It is celebrated just before the arrival of spring. It is also known as the Great Night of Shiva or Shivaratri and is one of the largest and most significant among the sacred festival nights of India.

**March 10:** Meatfare Sunday (The Sunday of the Last Judgment), traditionally the last day of eating meat before Easter for Orthodox Christians.

**March 10 -April 9 (sundown to sundown):** Ramadan, an Islamic holy month marked by fasting, praise, prayer, charity, and devotion to Islam. The holy month is a time meant for reflection, peace and getting closer to God.

**March 13-April 15:** Deaf History Month. This observance celebrates key events in deaf history, including the founding of Gallaudet University and the American School for the Deaf.

**March 17:** Cheesefare Sunday or Forgiveness Sunday, the last Sunday prior to the commencement of Great Lent for Orthodox Christians.

**March 17:** St. Patrick's Day, a holiday started in Ireland to recognize St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland who brought Christianity to the country in the early days of the faith.

**March 18:** Beginning of Great Lent in the Orthodox Christian faith. March 18, the day Great Lent begins this year, is also known as Clean Monday.

**March 19:** St. Joseph's Day, in Western Christianity the principal feast of St. Joseph, the husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

**March 20-21:** Nowruz/Norooz/Naw-Rúz, Persian New Year, a day of joy, celebration and renewal. It is held annually on the spring equinox. Nowruz has been celebrated in Iran and the Persian diaspora for more than 3,000 years. It is also Bahá'í New Year. Its roots are as a feast day in Zoroastrianism, a religion practiced in ancient Persia that viewed the arrival of spring as a victory over darkness. Parsis in India follow a different calendar so they celebrate Nowruz in August.

**March 23:** Lazarus Saturday, a day celebrated by the Eastern Orthodox Church and Oriental Orthodoxy to commemorate the raising of Lazarus of Bethany.

**March 24:** Palm Sunday, a Christian holiday commemorating the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. It is the last Sunday of Lent and the beginning of the Holy Week.

**March 24:** Orthodox Sunday, celebrated on the first Sunday of Great Lent. It is the celebration of the victory of the iconodules over the iconoclasts by the decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Council. Therefore, the service is to commemorate the restoration of icons for use in services and private devotional life of Christians.

**March 25:** Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, a Christian celebration of the announcement by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary that she would conceive and become the mother of Jesus.

**March 25:** Holi, the annual Hindu and Sikh spring religious festival observed in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, along with other countries with large Hindu and Sikh populations. People celebrate Holi by throwing colored powder and water at each other. Bonfires are lit the day before in the memory of the miraculous escape that young Prahlada accomplished when demoness Holika carried him into the fire. It is often celebrated on the full moon (the Phalguna Purnima) before the beginning of the Vernal Equinox as based on the Hindu calendar.

**March 25-27:** Hola Mohalla, a Sikh festival that takes place on the second day of the lunar month of Chet, a day after the Hindu spring festival Holi.

**March 8:** International Women's Day. First observed in 1911 in Germany, it has now become a major global celebration honoring women's economic, political and social achievements.

**March 26:** Khordad Sal (Birth of prophet Zoroaster), birth anniversary (or birthdate) of Zoroaster, a spiritual leader and ethical philosopher who taught a spiritual philosophy of self-realization and realization of the divine. Zoroastrians celebrate this day with prayer and feasting. Parsis in India follow a different calendar so they celebrate Khordad Sal in August.

Local or regional customs may use a variation of this date.

**March 28:** Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday), the Christian holiday commemorating the Last Supper, at which Jesus and the Apostles were together for the last time before the Crucifixion. It is celebrated on the Thursday before Easter.

**March 29:** Good Friday, a day celebrated by Christians to commemorate the execution of Jesus by crucifixion. It is recognized on the Friday before Easter.

**March 31:** Easter, a holiday celebrated by Christians to recognize Jesus' return from death after the Crucifixion.

**March 31:** International Transgender Day of Visibility, celebrated to bring awareness to transgender people and their identities as well as recognize those who helped fight for rights for transgender people.

## April

April is Celebrate Diversity Month to recognize and honor the diversity surrounding us all. By celebrating differences and similarities during this month, organizers hope that people will get a deeper understanding of each other.

April is Autism Awareness Month, established to raise awareness about the developmental disorder that affects an individual's normal development of social and communication skills.

April is a National Volunteer Month, which was started to encourage volunteerism at a young age. By volunteering, people can help save lives and create better environments for us all to live within. Thanking volunteers, such as volunteer fire and ambulance departments, is also an aspect of the celebration.

April is National Arab American Heritage Month, celebrating the heritage and culture of Arab Americans, as well as honoring contributions from Arab Americans.

**April 2:** World Autism Awareness Day, created to raise awareness of the developmental disorder around the globe.

**April 6:** Laylat al-Qadr, the holiest night of the year for Muslims, is traditionally celebrated on one of the last ten days of Ramadan, often thought to be on the 27th day of Ramadan. It is known as the Night of Power and commemorates the night that the Quran was first revealed to the prophet Muhammad.

**April 9-10 (sundown to sundown):** Eid al-Fitr, the first day of the Islamic month of Shawwal, marking the end of Ramadan. Many Muslims attend communal prayers, listen to a khutuba (sermon), and give Zakat al-Fitr (charity in the form of food) during Eid al-Fitr.

**April 13:** Vaisakhi (also known as Baisakhi), the celebration of the founding of the Sikh community as the Khalsa (community of the initiated) and the birth of the Khalsa.

**April 15:** Patriots' Day, an annual event on the third Monday of April, commemorating the battles of Lexington, Concord, and Menotomy, some of the first battles of the American Revolutionary War. Celebrations include battle reenactments and the Boston Marathon.

**April 17:** Ram Navami, a Hindu day of worship and celebration of the seventh avatar of Vishnu (Lord Rama). Devotees typically wear red and place extravagant flowers on the shrine of the God.

**April 20-21:** First Day of Ridván, commemorates Bahá'u'lláh's declaration that he was a Manifestation of God. It celebrates the beginning of the Bahá'í Faith.

**April 21:** Mahavir Jayanti, a holiday celebrated by the Jains commemorating the birth of Lord Mahavira. It is one of the most important religious festivals for Jains.

**April 22:** Lord's Evening Meal, Jehovah's Witnesses commemorate an event believed to have occurred on the first night of Passover in approximately 33 CE, the Last Supper, known as the Lord's Evening Meal.

**April 22(sunset) to April 30 (sunset):** Passover, an eight-day Jewish holiday and festival in commemoration of the emancipation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt.

**April 23:** St. George's Day, the feast day of St. George celebrated by various Christian churches.

**April 29:** Ninth Day of Ridván, a festival of joy and unity in the Bahá'í faith to commemorate the reunification of Bahá'u'lláh's family, and by extension the unity of the entire human family the Bahá'í faith calls for. It permeates the symbolic meaning of the Ninth Day of Ridvan.

## May

May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in the United States. The month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks on the project were Chinese immigrants. May is Older Americans Month, to honor the legacies and contributions of older Americans and to support them as they enter their next stage of life.

May is Jewish American Heritage Month, which recognizes the diverse contributions of the Jewish people to American culture.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month (or Mental Health Month), which aims to raise awareness and educate the public about mental illnesses and reduce the stigma that surrounds mental illnesses.

**May 1:** Twelfth Day of Ridván, commemorates the departure of Bahá'u'lláh and his family from the Garden of Ridván.

**May 2:** National Day of Prayer, a day of observance in the United States when people are asked to "turn to God in prayer and meditation."

**May 5:** Cinco de Mayo, a Mexican holiday commemorating the Mexican army's 1862 victory over France at the Battle of Puebla during the Franco-Mexican War (1861-1867). This day celebrates Mexican culture and heritage, including parades and mariachi music performances.

**May 5:** Orthodox Easter (also called Pascha), a later Easter date than observed by many Western churches.

**May 5-6:** Yom HaShoah, Israel's day of remembrance for the approximately 6 million Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

**May 9:** Ascension of Jesus or Ascension Day, is celebrated as the ascension of Christ from Earth in the presence of God within most of the Christian faith.

**May 15:** Buddha Day (Vesak or Visakha Puja), a Buddhist festival that marks Gautama Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death. It falls on the day of the full moon in May and it is a gazetted holiday in India.

**May 18:** Armed Forces Day, a special holiday for people all over the world to come together to thank and honor the current members of the United States Armed Forces.

**May 24-25:** Declaration of the Báb, the day of declaration of the Báb, the forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith.

**May 19:** Pentecost, the celebration of the giving of the Ten Commandments by God at Mount Sinai.

**May 25-26 (sundown to sundown):** Lag BaOmer, a Jewish holiday marking the day of hillula of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

**May 26:** Trinity Sunday, observed in the Western Christian faith as a feast in honor of the Holy Trinity.

**May 27:** Memorial Day, observed the last Monday in May, honors the people who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces. Many Americans observe the holiday by visiting cemeteries or memorials, holding family gatherings, and participating in parades.

**May 29-30:** Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, commemorates the passing of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith.

**May 30:** Corpus Christi, a Catholic holiday celebrating the presence of the body and blood of Christ, in the Eucharist.

## June

June is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Pride Month, established to recognize the impact that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals have had on the world. LGBTQ+ groups celebrate this special time with pride parades, picnics, parties, memorials. The last Sunday in June is Gay Pride Day.

June is Immigrant Heritage Month and gives people across the United States an opportunity to annually explore their own heritage and celebrate the shared diversity that forms the unique story of America. It celebrates immigrants across the United States and their contributions to their local communities and economy.

**June 2:** Native American Citizenship Day, commemorating the day in 1924 when the U.S. Congress passed legislation recognizing the citizenship of Native Americans.

**June 7:** Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart is a solemnity in the liturgical calendar of the Roman Catholic Church.

**June 11 - 13 (sundown to sundown):** Shavuot, a Jewish holiday that has double significance. It marks the all-important wheat harvest in Israel and commemorates the anniversary of the day when God gave the Torah to the nation of Israel assembled at Mount Sinai.

**June 16-17:** Eid al-Abha, or the Feast of Sacrifice

**June 19:** Juneteenth, also known as Freedom Day or Emancipation Day. It is observed as a public holiday in 14 U.S. states. This celebration honors the day in 1865 when slaves in Texas and Louisiana finally heard they were free, two months after the end of the Civil War. June 19, therefore, became the day of emancipation for thousands of African-Americans.

**June 29:** Feast Day of Saints Peter and Paul, a liturgical feast in honor of the martyrdom in Rome for the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul in Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

**Last Sunday in June:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQI+) Pride Day in the United States. It commemorates the Stonewall Riots on June 28, 1969.