



Diversity Inc.

Human
Beings
For
Diversity

Racial Equity
LGBTQ+ Advocacy
Anti-Religious Discrimination

Winter 2020

Equity and Compassion Beyond COVID-19

As a global health crisis has entered all of our lives, we've seen the impact on equity in education, challenges to our daily economics, and have only begun to see the ramifications on our psyches from social distancing and for some, social isolation. We must all recognize that for now, these challenges may be our new normal. What a lot of you are seeing as interruptions to daily lives, this "new normal", has been the day to day for many marginalized populations for much longer.

There have been adults living paycheck-to-paycheck worrying everyday about what it will look like for them if that paycheck doesn't come. 51.6% of students in Connecticut participate in free- or reduced-price school lunch and also eat school breakfast. Without access to meal programs, many of those students go hungry. In our public school system, teachers and other educational professionals report one in every five child abuse claims in the nation. Everyday stress, economic instability, and housing insecurity can increase these abusive situations. And in urban neighborhoods, Black, brown and communities of color often lack access to quality health care.

While most of us have not seen a health crisis of this magnitude before in our lifetimes, inequities that have always been there are now lit up for others to see. It's a scary world at the moment. For many, it's always been scary. My point? These issues are not new.

During the spread of COVID-19, we are being hyper vigilant making sure those who are hungry are fed, that children are accounted for during virtual class, that our seniors are protected, and that the newly unemployed are instilled with the hope that their homes will be safe. But, to achieve true equity, we must address these constant struggles as if they are always in the foreground, not only during a national emergency.

There used to be a commercial during the 90's that interrupted every show I watched to give television viewers about three minutes of educational information. It always ended with "The More You Know". So, now you know. We all know more than we did before. How do you continue to stay mindful of the issues that you have recognized beyond a global pandemic?

To start, begin questioning perceptions. When we challenge our perceptions, we begin to think differently about our assumptions. For instance, does everyone have access to quality healthcare? Does a newly unemployed friend or neighbor have three to six months' worth of savings? Is every child safer at home than in school?

At some point our social distancing will be over. Kids will go back to school and our society will look the same as it had before all of this began. It will look the same, but should it?

~ by Giovanna Adams

Note from the CEO

Our hearts go out to all those affected by COVID-19's rapid spread. There's no doubt that there is much uncertainty ahead as we continue to address this fast-moving global challenge. We know that as Americans we are strong, but together we can show the world our capacity for compassion and solidarity.

HB4 Diversity Let's Talk : Community Conversations

During this difficult time, HB4 Diversity, Inc. intends to follow the guidelines set forth by the CDC and government entities to practice social distancing and limit public gatherings to essential needs. As such, please look for our Let's Talk: Community Conversation 2020 series once it is safe for us to host these important discussions.

Everyone please stay healthy.

Follow our Facebook

facebook.com/hb4diversity/

Remembering Ella Baker

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s changed the United States in innumerable tangible and intangible ways. Of the many photographs, videos, and sound bites commonly used to depict the actions from the height of the Civil Rights Movement, most prominently feature images and voices of men. Who were the women of the Civil Rights Movement? When it comes to women in the fight for freedom and civil rights for black people, there are very few women famously given credit for their efforts.

During the 1960s, women, especially black women, did not enjoy freedoms in the same way most men did. Even in the midst of fighting for basic rights, men tended to push women into the background and, at times, forbade them from having a public place in the Movement.

One woman, Ella Baker, forged ahead despite the double-standard. Born in Virginia in 1903, she credits her grandmother, who was enslaved at birth, as her inspiration to challenge the status quo. During her college years, Ms. Baker worked hard to challenge unfair practices. After graduating with honors from Shaw University in North Carolina, she immediately focused on equity at the national level. With a move to New York City, Ms. Baker took a position as a field secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Years later, she would become the director of that branch. In the meantime, she moved around the country to raise money, found and co-found organizations, and conduct trainings for resistance and planned protest.

Ms. Baker played a direct and crucial role in Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s rise to the platform he had during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Although she was critical to the success of organizations such as the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC), Ms. Baker was not interested in being a powerful person. She opposed building movements dependent on a small group of people. Her dream was to empower people to change their environments and demand their own freedoms. One of her most quoted statements is "... strong people don't need strong leaders."

Though she was not well known, her story is being told more frequently in this age of 'real truth'. Ella Baker dedicated her life to interrupting systems by teaching people to be change agents. When she died in 1986, the country was a far better place for black people and women than at her birth. There is still much work to be done, and Ms. Baker's example should be remembered this month and every month.

~ by Michelle Weaver

Sources:

<https://allthatsinteresting.com/ella-baker>

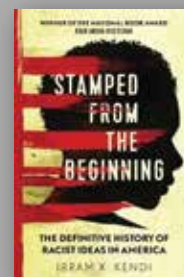
<https://ellabakercenter.org/about/who-was-ella-baker>

<https://why.org/articles/the-invisible-women-of-the-civil-rights-movement/>

Books to help transcend racial, LGBTQ+ and other inequities.

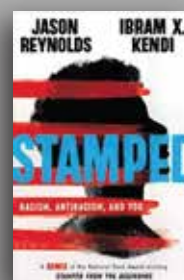
Stamped from the Beginning by Ibram X. Kendi

The National Book Award winning history of how racist ideas were created, spread, and deeply rooted in American society.



Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You: A Remix of the National Book Award-winning Stamped from the Beginning by Jason Reynolds & Ibram X. Kendi

This recent book, published March 2020, shines a light on the many insidious forms of racist ideas--and on ways readers can identify and stamp out racist thoughts in their daily lives. Based on Kendi's book above, this version breaks down the message for a broad audience.



“One of the things that has to be faced is the process of waiting to change the system, how much we have got to do to find out who we are, where we have come from and where we are going.”

~ Ella Baker

HB4 Diversity, Inc.

A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

Our Mission

HB4 is dedicated to partnering with communities to advance equity education.

Our goal is to create opportunities to learn from and about various cultures and groups.

By considering the variety of perspectives within small towns, we offer non-partisan assistance to community leaders seeking to promote greater inclusivity.

Our Vision

We seek to promote strategies that embrace the intersections of race, gender, religion, class, identity and the array of barriers that empower those that are marginalized in society.

Through empathy and understanding, we strive to pursue outlets for ongoing dialog.

While continuously creating and providing resources, we hope to improve small communities making them a place where all people feel welcome, safe, and valued.

Who We Are

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A History Worth More Than A Month

Each year in February and March, we celebrate Black History Month and Women's History month, respectively. While these dedicated timeframes allow us to focus on honoring and praising the historical significance of these under-appreciated and under-recognized groups, it becomes increasingly apparent that one month is not enough.

Black History Month traces its roots to 1926. Prior to the first introduction of a week-long African American awareness celebration by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the idea of highlighting achievements from African American history so they would not be lost to time had never been addressed.* After 50 years, the week would officially be recognized as a full month by President Gerald Ford in 1976.∧

National Women's History Month began as a movement on March 8th, 1857 when female textile workers marched in protest of their working conditions and unequal rights. Since 1910, March 8th remains an important focus as International Women's Day, but the inclusion of a month-long recognition on Congress' calendar was not approved until 1987.*

If we are to fully appreciate the comprehensive story that could be told from either of these very important historical perspectives, we must look past a single month that is tied to significant dates and people. For all of us actively engaging in equity conversations, I envision a time in the future where we don't require a month to highlight Black History or Women's History, because they just become a part of History. Until then, how can we work to keep the conversation going past the dedicated month of February or March?

Highlight your heroes year round. Share books written by women, black people, and people of color at any opportunity. Post milestone moments whenever they are relevant. Participate in HB4 Diversity's Let's Talk: Community Conversations throughout the 2020 calendar year. Participate in respectful, open dialogue with those looking to learn from your historical knowledge. As active, engaged members of society, we can change the length of conversations and the depth of appreciation of history for all of us.

~ by Julie Hansen

Sources

* <https://www.diversitycentral.com/calendar/heritagemonthguide.php>

∧ <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-history-month>

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