A Seasonal Newsletter on Youth Development, Risk Management & Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

A Peek Into Our February Issue:

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Welcome! Happy 2021!!

We’ve created this newsletter in the spirit of true community cohesion, learning, and growth. Each section of this newsletter is dedicated to one of the pillars of our community - Youth Development, Risk Management and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. We have also included a reading list and "watchlist" in the spirit of #continuouslearning during this time of #socialdistancing and will be highlighting a poem & artist each month.

In honor of Black History Month, we are highlighting Black voices, authors and stories in this issue. We also want to bring attention to the recent increase in hate crimes against the East Asian community and have included recent coverage in our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion section.

We miss you! Stay healthy & enjoy!
Celebrating your middle and high school students' unique identities can bolster connections and improve performance in school.

"Hindered by video screens, fluctuating schedules, and health regulations, teachers are up against the odds this school year when it comes to getting to know their students. "It's hard to really get to know your students through a webcam."

@mark_beavqua wrote on Twitter, while cheri_cheralex shared her struggles of seeing students in masks or "with eyes only."

While get-to-know-you activities are typically earmarked for the first weeks of school, they shouldn’t end there, say educators and researchers. Whether it’s that they love to play baseball, have three brothers, or enjoy writing or photography, celebrating your students’ unique experiences and identities can bolster connections that keep them engaged and performing better in school. Students who have a deeper sense of self—and purpose—are also better able to define their goals and stay focused on pursuing them, concluded a 2014 study from David Yeager, Angela Duckworth, and colleagues.

We collected an array of class exercises from interviews with teachers, online resources, and our archives that will help students develop greater self-awareness and purpose. These insights can also give you a better sense of who they are, so you can be responsive to their interests—even if you’re separated by screens or masks.

**REFLECTING ON EXPERIENCES: ‘LAWS OF LIFE’ ESSAYS**

In the early 2000s, educators in an urban, high-poverty district in New Jersey gave their middle and high school students an interesting essay assignment: Write about the values and principles that guide your life. The seemingly small activity, called “Laws of Life,” is based on the work of philanthropist John Templeton, and it turned into a much bigger project that helped students develop a stronger sense of self, purpose, and possibility for the future, according to Maurice Elias, a psychology professor at Rutgers University. The project has since been replicated all over the world.

To run the assignment in your class, Elias recommends asking students to reflect on their past—in and out of school—and the experiences and people that made them who they are.”

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**Further Learning:**

- **PROOF POINTS:** New wave of research shows nudging students by text is not as promising as hoped.
- **How Youth Development Programs Have Responded to COVID-19:** Creativity, Innovation, and Doing What’s Brave and What’s Right.

No Retreat: Convening Communities of Caring in Times of Loss and Grief

"As camp professionals we’ve got a lock on how to plan for, organize, and deliver high-quality summer learning programs for children and young adults. Amidst the rush of preparing our staff to be effective counselors of youth, establish meaningful mentoring relationships, and model such important constructs as sensitivity, positive risk-taking, conflict resolution, and leadership, we may unwittingly lose sight of the fact that one of the most seminal achievements of our work is creating communities — year after year.

Jane Tuohy, a founding partner and principal of Cambridge Hill Partners, Inc., a management consulting firm focused on helping organizations reshape, reposition, and create renewed momentum, told me over lunch near Harvard Square some time ago, "camps are really good" examples for large organizations of how to create inclusive, emotionally intelligent ecosystems.

WHEN THINGS GO WELL

In a 2016 article, Lucy Norvell, former director of development and communications for the American Camp Association, New England, spoke to the start of a national trend that would translate into measurable — and profound — outcomes for youth lucky enough to go to camp. She said, "From the time courageous and forward-thinking educators created what has grown to become a worldwide camp movement here . . . they knew that something was lacking in children’s overall education . . . Those lucky campers who hiked and adventured along Connecticut’s Long Island Sound spent most of their time in the out-of-doors learning. With lots to discover about themselves and about being a member of a group, these were the first of millions of children to benefit from the experiential education that day and overnight camps uniquely provide" (Norvell, 2016).

What are some of the ways a summer camp experience might help young people?"

Read More:

Further Learning:
• Help Your Employees Manage Their Re-Entry Anxiety
• Why People of Color Often Feel Unsafe in the Outdoors
• At The Intersection of Black History Month, Mental Health and Racial Healing
DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Josephine Butler and Environmental Activism in Washington, DC

"The first time I heard about Josephine Butler was when I stepped into the building named after her---the Josephine Butler Parks Center. Located at 2437 Fifteenth Street NW in Washington, DC, adjacent to the Malcolm X Park (also known as Meridian Hill Park), the Josephine Butler Parks Center---referred to as the “Embassy of the Earth”---was once the former embassies of Hungary and Brazil. Operated by Washington Parks and People, a non-profit whose mission is to “grow city-wide park[s] based on community health and vitality by nurturing innovation and partnerships,” the Center is located on sacred grounds---as the Malcolm X/Meridian Hill Park and adjacent area were once the loci for “Native American spiritual territory; the birthplace of both George Washington University, and an African-American theological seminary; and a Civil War Union Army hospital.”

While the Center itself is enchanting---its light-yellow exterior and interior serve as a popular wedding venue in Washington, DC---it is the resounding activism of Josephine Butler, a Black woman who catalyzed change in Washington, DC---that made me want to know more about her. I also began to wonder why I did not know about her or her political contributions prior to entering the Center.

Josephine Dorothy Butler---who was affectionately known as “Jo”---was born on January 24, 1920, in Brandywine, Maryland. Her parents were sharecroppers and her grandparents were enslaved peoples, whose hometown and origins are unknown. After attending Frederick Douglass High School in Upper Marlboro, Maryland and Strayer College, and suffering from typhoid, Butler moved from Brandywine to Washington, DC in 1934 to receive better medical treatment."


Further Learning:
- Anger And Fear As Asian American Seniors Targeted In Bay Area Attacks
- Erika Hart’s “Black People Tell Black History”
- 28 Days of Black History
- Hate Crimes Against Asian Americans Are on the Rise. Many Say More Policing Isn’t the Answer
THE DEEP
Author: Rivers Soloman
The water-breathing descendants of African enslaved women tossed overboard have built their own underwater society—and must reclaim the memories of their past to shape their future in this brilliant imaginative novella inspired by the Hugo Award-nominated song "The Deep" from Daveed Diggs's rap group clipping.

JUST AS I AM: A MEMOIR
Author: Cicely Tyson
Cicely Tyson lived. The actress, artist, and muse passed away at 96, but while she graced the Earth with her presence, Tyson lived an extraordinary life. In her memoir, Just As I Am, Tyson promises to give readers a "plain and unvarnished" look at her amazing life "with the glitter and garland set aside."

ZAMI: A NEW SPELLING OF MY NAME
Author: Audre Lorde
Zami: A New Spelling of My Name is an autobiography by the iconic poet Audre Lorde, and a love letter to the Black women in Lorde's life. According to the New York Times, with this book Lorde is credited with birthing a new genre of memoir called "biomythography," which combines history, biography, and myth.

THE COOKING GENE: A JOURNEY THROUGH AFRICAN AMERICAN CULINARY HISTORY IN THE OLD SOUTH
Author: Michael W. Twitty
A renowned culinary historian offers a fresh perspective on our most divisive cultural issue, race, in this illuminating memoir of Southern cuisine and food culture that traces his ancestry—both black and white—through food, from Africa to America and slavery to freedom.

Southern food is integral to the American culinary tradition, yet the question of who "owns" it is one of the most provocative touch points in our ongoing struggles over race. In this unique memoir, culinary historian Michael W. Twitty takes readers to the white-hot center of this fight, tracing the roots of his own family and the charged politics surrounding the origins of soul food, barbecue, and all Southern cuisine.
WHAT HAPPENED, MISS SIMONE?
Using never-before-heard recordings, rare archival footage and her best-known songs, this is the story of legendary singer and activist Nina Simone.

Stream on Netflix

MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM
Tensions and temperatures rise at a Chicago music studio in 1927 when fiery, fearless blues singer Ma Rainey joins her band for a recording session.

Stream on Netflix

JUDAS AND THE BLACK MESSIAH
Fred Hampton, a young, charismatic activist, becomes Chairman of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party — putting him directly in the crosshairs of the government, the FBI, and the Chicago Police. But to destroy the revolution, the authorities are going to need a man on the inside.

Stream on HBO Max

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF MARTHA P. JOHNSON
As she fights the tide of violence against trans women, activist Victoria Cruz probes the suspicious 1992 death of her friend Marsha P. Johnson.

Stream on Netflix
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough
to see it,
if only we're brave enough
to be it.

- Amanda Gorman
22 year old National Youth Poet Laureate
Artist of the Month

DC Statehood Murals

The murals are located at: 620 T Street NW, 201 Bryant Street NW, 1351 Wisconsin Avenue NW, 2810 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, 2309 Wisconsin Avenue NW, 4608 14th Street NW, 1310 Childress Street NE, 1725 West Virginia Avenue NE, 1333 H Street NE, 640 10th Street NE, 801 West Virginia Avenue SE, 1350 49th Street NE and 2700 South Capitol Street SE.

Mural by César Maxit: You Are Loved

Mural by Jay Hudson