

DIVERSITY CAFE

December Café Special

Did you know that millions of people in the United States won't be celebrating Christmas this December?

That's right. Tens of millions of Americans don't celebrate Christmas religiously, either as followers of non-Christian religions or as individuals with no religious affiliation.

Because of the popular and highly visible Christmas tradition with its plethora of Santa Claus, ornaments, and Christmas fanfare, it's easy to overlook the depth of the diversity present in America and our workplace during this season. In reality, various events, both spiritual, religious, and tradition based, are being celebrated.

It used to be that being inclusive meant sending out politically correct "Happy Holidays" greeting cards and changing Christmas office parties to "holiday parties." Today, celebrating inclusiveness and diversity is about more than just changing labels and titles. It's about using the holiday celebration time to be with personal friends, family, and our own work family to build understanding and awareness about each other.

The month of December also gives us the most number of "Teachable Moments" to learn about other groups. The celebration of Christmas, the Jewish Hanukkah, the Buddhist Rohatsu, and the African-American Kwanzaa, all occur in December. Each of these celebrations is very different in their practices and significance. The challenge is to encourage inclusion and be supportive of religious and cultural diversity and not violate any laws.

A good way to approach diversity over the holiday season is to use it as an educational opportunity, as some public schools do. In the workplace, we can recognize the diverse cultures our employees come from and their various observances.

This December, the Diversity Council's International Committee, in collaboration with Public Works Employee Affinity groups, is organizing a Multicultural Festival to help us discover various cultures by taking in the sights, sounds, and tastes that reflect each distinct flavor and heritage.

Can you sing, dance, or play a musical instrument? Can you cook a traditional dish from your culture or share a story about how your family celebrates the holidays? We invite you to share your holiday observances with us through stories, poetry, art, music, dancing, singing, foods, or arts and crafts. For more information, please contact Flora Wiegiers at (626) 458-5193 or Steve Milewski at (626) 458-3573.



Café Quote of the Month

"I like to compare the holiday season with the way a child listens to a favorite story. The pleasure is in the familiar way the story begins, the anticipation of familiar turns it takes, the familiar moments of suspense, and the familiar climax and ending."

- Fred Rogers



THIS MONTH'S SPECIALS

Celebrating Holidays and Building Community



Café News

The International Committee will host the 6th Annual "Holidays Around the World" multicultural festival in the Headquarter's Courtyard (weather permitting) with live music, dance groups, ethnic food, and booths featuring different cultural arts and crafts on December 20, 2012, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Diversity Calendar

December 2, 2012 - Hanukkah Family Festival at the Skirball Cultural Center welcomes people of all backgrounds to celebrate the festival of lights. For more details, visit www.skirball.org.

December 24, 2012 - 53rd Annual Los Angeles County Holiday Celebration. Choirs, bands, and dance companies representing the diverse cultures and holiday traditions of Los Angeles will be on display at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. For more details, visit <http://www.lacountyarts.org/holiday.html>.

December 29, 2012 - Kwanzaa Heritage Festival and Parade, a unique African Cultural event that is great fun for the entire family celebrating the very best of the arts, including a drum circle, live music, children's village, authentic crafts, and a warm environment. For more details, visit voices.yahoo.com/kwanzaa-celebration-los-angeles-5115033.html.

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VISION

Creating communities...sustaining life

MISSION

We provide public infrastructure and municipal services to protect and enrich the daily lives of over ten million people in Los Angeles County

VALUES



Safety



Integrity



Teamwork



Transparency



Excellence



Employees



Sustainability

CORE SERVICE AREAS

Public Buildings

Transportation

Waste Management

Development Services

Water Resources

Emergency Management

2012

