

# OUR VOICES

The Newsletter of the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee at

WARREN  VILLAGE.



## September is Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month!

Hispanic Heritage Month is an opportunity to recognize the achievements and contributions of descendants of Latin Americans and of countries with Spanish as their first language. When we refer to heritage, it is not just customs and traditions; it is also how we develop a sense of identity and belonging. It is a union of tangible and intangible aspects such as language. During this month, taking the time to honor and understand the terms Hispanic, Latina/o and Latinx is a great step towards ending linguistically oppressive practices.

National Hispanic Heritage Month is observed every year from September 15th to October 15th in order to commemorate the rich histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors hailed from Spanish speaking countries and regions; including Spain, Mexico and the Caribbean.

Initially, it was observed as a weeklong observation in 1968, introduced by California Congressman George E. Brown. Brown wanted to recognize the contributions of the Hispanic and Latinx community, as that was the primary population he served. On September 17, 1968 President Lyndon Johnson declared the first Hispanic Heritage Week. The observation expanded into a 30 day period and was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1988. In 1989, President George H.W. Bush became the first president to declare National Hispanic Heritage month.

September 15th is an important date because it celebrates the independence for the Latin American countries of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Additionally, Mexico, Chile and Belize celebrate their independence days on September 16th, 18th and 21st. [Source 1](#) | [Source 2](#)

*"Not all of the contributions made by Hispanic Americans to our society are so visible or so widely celebrated, however, Hispanic Americans have enriched our nation beyond measure with the quiet strength of closely knit families and proud communities."*  
- President George H.W. Bush

Meet the DEI Outreach Subcommittee!

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## Hispanic or Latin/x?

Historically, the term commonly used is **Hispanic**. In a study conducted by the Pew Research Center (2020), although most of the study participants were Latin Americans, they showed a preference for the term Hispanic and not Latina/o. Interestingly, the term Hispanic, Latina/o and Latinx preferences are class based. The term Hispanic began to be used under Nixon's administration in response to agencies and organizations wanting to count those of Spanish-speaking descent including Spain. The controversy around this is that it is not inclusive of non-Spanish speakers and not used in Latin America as a rejection of colonialism.

The term Latina/o became popular in the 80's with the intention to include non-Spanish-speaking groups and countries in Latin America (Cadava, 2020). The disagreement around this term is that it is considered not gender inclusive. Latina/o is more related to geography and not language.

The term Latinx was popularized by millennials and Gen Z in 2015 to be more inclusive of gender identities (Carrasco, 2019). The statement surrounding this term these days is that English speakers are telling Spanish speakers how to be, and it eliminates Latinas. According to Ivis Garcia (2020), Latinx is a discourse outside of Hispanic/Latino/a/as; it is a broader cultural shift to raise awareness of gender. There are also those who perceive it as an attack on the Spanish language.

Although these terms are often used interchangeably, they actually mean different things. Is never a bad idea to ask in your community or work space which terms they would prefer? Hispanic, Latino/a, and Latinx Heritage Month should be a way of knocking down language barriers while also keeping the spirit of different cultures alive.

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*Words such as Hispanic or Latinx are limiting. We come in all shapes, sizes, colors, and dialects. There's no one word that fits all.*

- Lawrence Hernandez

## Did You Know That September is also Deaf Awareness Month?

Deaf Awareness Month is celebrated to help raise awareness about the language, culture, and diversity of the Deaf community in the United States.

Sign language is **not** a universal language. Why not? Because sign languages develop naturally out in communities, the same way spoken languages do. Sign languages aren't artificially created, nor are they gifts given to deaf people by hearing ones—they're fully-realized, complex languages with their own grammars, syntaxes, and vocabularies.

In North America, the primary sign language used is American Sign Language (ASL). According to the World Federation of the Deaf, there are more than **200** signed languages used worldwide!

Signed languages are the heart of Deaf culture and community. Deaf people are the experts on their language, so they should be the ones consulted, and paid, for the work of teaching. Historically, Deaf people have been stigmatized and oppressed by hearing society for their use of sign language, so for hearing teachers to take Deaf jobs and profit from teaching sign is a form of cultural appropriation.

[Source](#)

Click [HERE](#) to learn more about Black American Sign language

Click [HERE](#) to learn more about Indigenous Sign Language

### Here are some Common ASL Phrases!





# *Moments of Mindfulness*

## *What Can I Do?*

It would be impossible to list all the contributions made by Hispanic people to American life. But there's no celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month without paying tribute to a few.

Read "**My Beloved World**," the autobiography of Sonia Sotomayor, a New Yorker of Puerto Rican descent who, in 2009, became the first Hispanic American to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court, as well as only the third woman to serve in the entire 220-year history of the nation's highest court.

Visit a farmers' market and give thanks to the United Farm Workers union (formerly the National Farm Workers Association), founded by Cesar Chavez, a revolutionary Mexican-American who dedicated his life to nonviolent protest in support of humane treatment of workers and civil rights. His union fought against pesticide use, low wages and cruel working conditions for farm workers.

You might also simply enjoy watching TV in color this month — thanks to Guillermo González Camarena, a Mexican engineer from Guadalajara who invented the color wheel component that helped make black and white TV a thing of the past.

## *Important Dates In October*

**October 1: Native American Women's Equal Pay Day.** The aim is to raise awareness about the wider-than-average pay gap between Native American women and White men. Native American women are paid 57 cents for every dollar paid to white men.

**October 6-14: Navaratri**, the nine-day 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 11: National Coming Out Day.** 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 18-19 (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.

**October 20: International Pronouns Day** seeks to make respecting, sharing, and educating about personal pronouns commonplace. Each year it is held on the third Wednesday of October.

**October 29: Latinx Women's Equal Pay Day.** The aim is to raise awareness about the wider-than-average pay gap between Latinx women and White men. Latinx women are paid 54 cents for every dollar paid to white men.

Click on the underlined links for more information!

