

# THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

BY: CULTURE CIRCLE



# CONGRATULATIONS ON LOOKING FOR THE BEST WAY TO CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Don't know what to do for Black History Month? Don't worry - we got you. This guide has everything from [the original article](#) and much more!

This guide will provide ways to authentically integrate Black History Month activities into your company culture, an editable-themed and detailed calendar for implementation, and an opportunity to highlight your fantastic work.

## WHAT'S INSIDE THE GUIDE

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### GUIDE DESIGN

CLICK ANY OF THE SECTION TITLES TO JUMP TO THAT SECTION INSTANTLY. EACH SECTION CAN BE EXTRACTED AND SHARED.

# WHAT IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and the African Diaspora. It is a time to celebrate and recognize how Black people have had a central role in history.

Also known as African American History Month, the event grew out of "Negro History Week," the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans.

Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month.

Other countries worldwide, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating Black history.

**Note:** Most of the information in this guide focuses on Black History in America. The African Diaspora consists of African-American, Afro-South American, and Afro-Caribbean.

# THE HISTORY OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

1920

**Carter G Woodson created** Negro History & Literature Week. He chose Feb because of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglas, as their birthdays were in February.

1926

**Woodson promotes Negro History Week** in Washington, DC.

1940

**West Virginia, influenced by Woodson,** began celebrating February as Negro History Month.

1960

**African-Americans become increasingly** aware of their heritage and the expansion of "Negro History week" to "Black."

1976

**The ASALH influences** the official shift from a week to a month and from "Negro History," and US Government officially recognizes it.

1976

**Negro History week Nationwide** shifted to Negro History Month and from Negro to Black History. It was officially recognized by the U.S. government.

1987

**The UK celebrated** its first Black History Month.



## BLACK HISTORY MONTH: HIGHLIGHTING HUMANS

This next section is a compilation of Black History Facts, Stories, and Highlights. To extract and share any of these facts, visit this folder.



**Frank Calvin Mann 1908-1992**  
America's first Black commercial airline pilot and stewardess, 1939 Northwest Airways. Stewardess unknown.



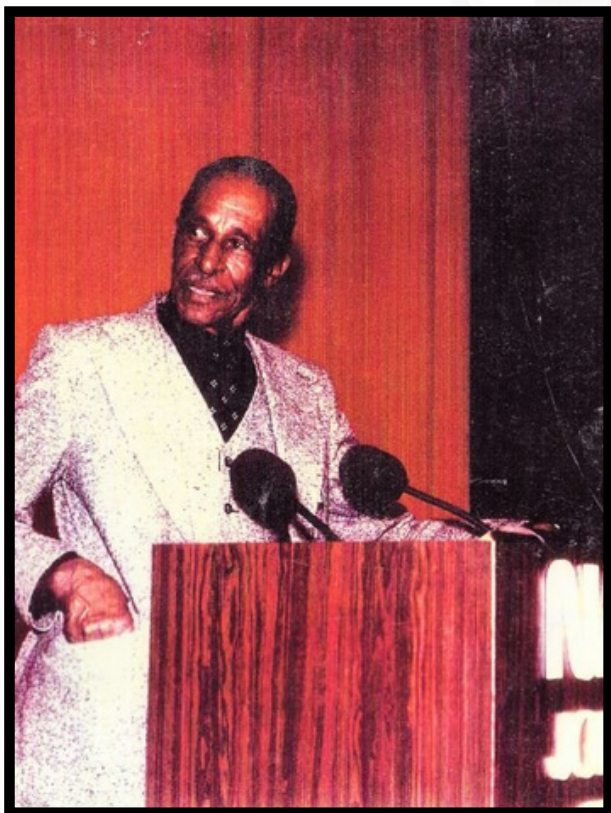
**Group photo** of the Pan-Tennessee dentist association convention in 1948.

**"Never be limited by other people's limited imaginations."**

—Dr. Mae Jemison

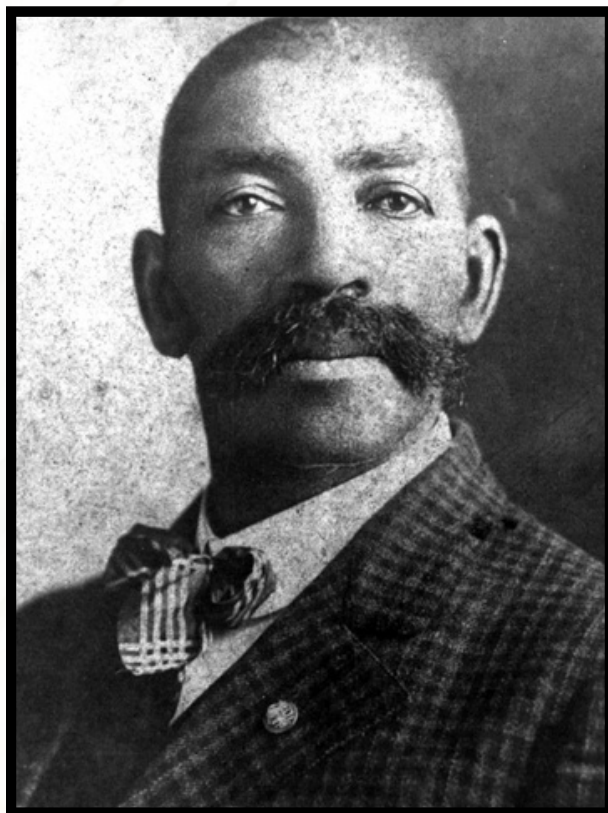
The first African-American female astronaut

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH: HIGHLIGHTING HUMANS



### **Frank Calvin Mann, 1908-1992**

Brilliant Aeronautical and Aerospace Engineer. Frank Calvin Mann was an American engineer known for participating in many of Howard Hughes's projects, including the Spruce Goose. He also starred in the Amos 'n' Andy radio show. His lifelong friendship with Hughes was instrumental in opening doors for Mann's exceptional talents.



### **Bass Reeves, The original Lone Ranger**

The man, the myth, the legend. Bass Reeves was a deputy Marshal who patrolled the Indian Territories. He Spoke several native languages. Caught many bad men, including, at one point arresting his son.

**"In recognizing the humanity of our fellow beings, we pay ourselves the highest tribute."**

—Thurgood Marshall

First African American U.S. Supreme Court member



# BLACK HISTORY MONTH: HIGHLIGHTING HUMANS



## Mary Fields

She drank whiskey, swore often, and smoked handmade cigars. She wore pants under her skirt and a gun under her apron. At six feet tall and two hundred pounds, Mary Fields was an intimidating woman.

Mary lived in Montana, in a town called Cascade. She was a special member of the community there. All schools would close on her birthday, and though women were not allowed entry into saloons, she was given special permission by the mayor to come in anytime, and to any saloon she liked. But Mary wasn't from Montana.

She was born into enslavement in Tennessee sometime in the early 1830s and lived enslaved for over thirty years until slavery was abolished.

As a free woman, life led her first to Florida to work for a family and then to Ohio when part of the family moved.

When Mary was 52, her close friend who lived in Montana became ill with pneumonia. Upon hearing the news, Mary dropped everything and came to nurse her friend back to health. Her friend soon recovered, and Mary decided to stay in Montana, settling in Cascade.

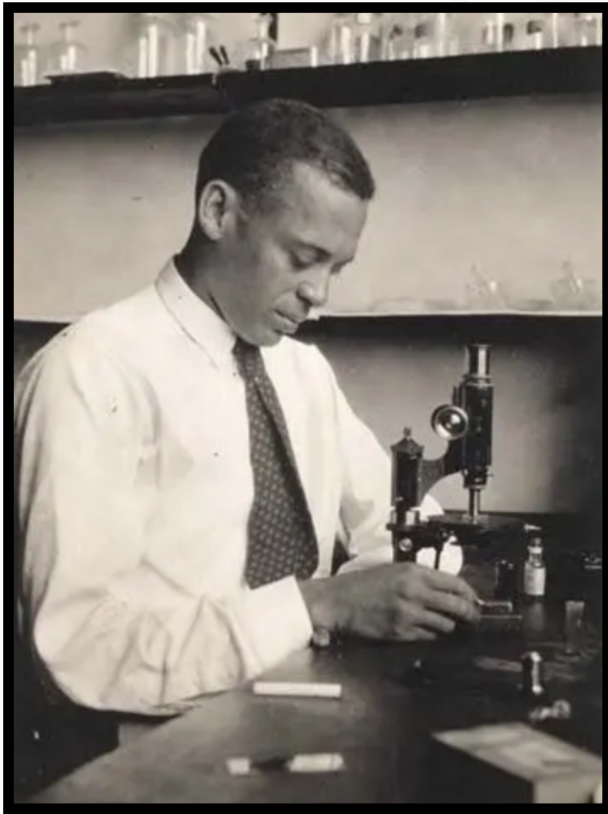
Her beginning in Cascade wasn't smooth. To make ends meet, she first tried her hand at the restaurant business. She opened a restaurant, but she wasn't much of a chef. And she was also too generous, never refusing to serve a customer who couldn't pay. So the restaurant failed within a year.

But then in 1895, when in her sixties, Mary, or as "Stagecoach Mary" as she was sometimes called because she never missed a day of work, became the second woman and first African American to work as a mail carrier in the U.S. She got the job because she was the fastest applicant to hitch six horses.

Eventually, she retired to a life of running a laundry business, babysitting all the kids in town, going to baseball games, and being friends with much of the townsfolk.

This was Mary Fields. A rebel, a legend.

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH: HIGHLIGHTING HUMANS



## **Ernest Everett**

Ernest Everett Just was a pioneering African-American biologist, academic, and science writer. Just's primary legacy is his recognition of the fundamental role of the cell surface in the development of organisms.



## **Edmonia Lewis**

Known as "Wildfire", was an American sculptor of mixed African-American and Native-American heritage. Born free in Upstate New York, she worked for most of her career in Rome, Italy.

**"Whatever we believe about ourselves and our ability comes true for us."**

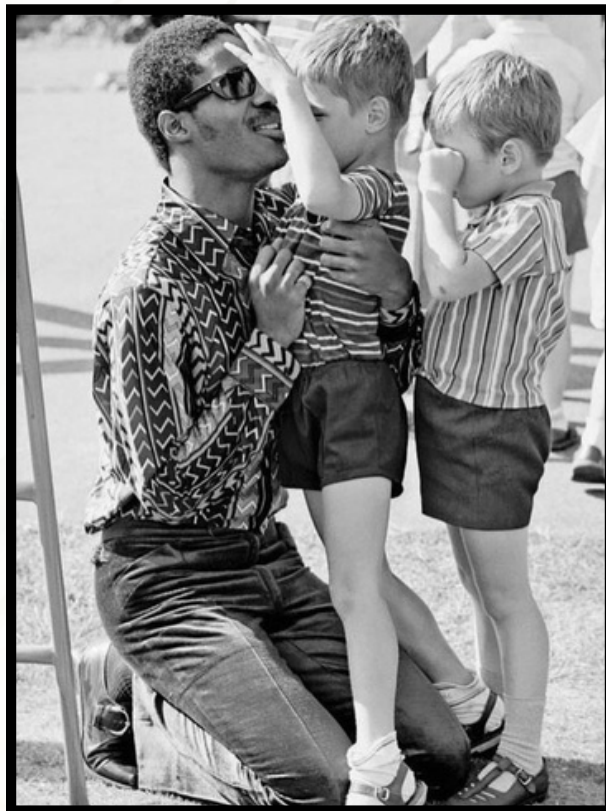
—Susan L. Taylor, journalist



# BLACK HISTORY MONTH: HIGHLIGHTING HUMANS



**The Black West, 1880s** One in four of America's cowboys were African-American.



**Stevie Wonder** visiting a children's school for the blind in London in 1970.

**“My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together.”**

—Desmond Tutu

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH: HIGHLIGHTING HUMANS



**First day of desegregated school.**  
Memphis, Tennessee, 1961.



**Hazel Dorothy Scott** was a Trinidadian-born jazz and classical pianist, singer, and actor. She was a critically acclaimed performing artist and an outspoken critic of racial discrimination and segregation. She used her influence to improve the representation of Black Americans in film.

**“Won’t it be wonderful when black history and Native American history and Jewish history and all of U.S. history is taught from one book. Just U.S. history.”**

—Maya Angelou



# BLACK HISTORY MONTH: HIGHLIGHTING HUMANS



**William "Willie" O'Ree (b. Oct 15, 1935)** was the first black player in an NHL regular season game. The left winger debuted with the Boston Bruins on Jan 18, 1958.



**Wangari Muta Maathai (1940-2011)** was the first Black woman to win the Nobel Prize. She authored four books and was the first woman in East and Central Africa to earn a Doctorate degree. Her focus was poverty reduction and environmental conservation through tree planting.

**"If the only time you think of me as a scientist is during Black History Month, then I must not be doing my job as a scientist."**

—Neil deGrasse Tyson



## BLACK HISTORY MONTH: HIGHLIGHTING HUMANS



**Alice Marie Coachman Davis** was the first black woman to win an Olympic gold medal. She specialized in the high jump.



**Fannie Lou Hamer** was a civil rights activist; she co-founded the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in 1964. In 1971 she helped found the Woman's National Political Caucus. In 1969 she launched the Freedom Farm Cooperative, buying land for Black people to own and farm collectively.

**“We have a wonderful history behind us...and it is going to inspire us to greater achievements.”**

—Carter G. Woodson

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH: HIGHLIGHTING HUMANS



**Barbara Smith Conrad (1937-2017)** was admitted to the University of Texas in 1956, where she sang opera and was awarded the lead in a University musical. Her role was revoked three days later because she was Black. She later went on to sing with leading orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic.



**Rock-n-Roll** was invented by a queer Black Woman born in 1915 in Arkansas. Tharpe was a musical prodigy and began playing in her local church at the age of four. Elvis, Johnny Cash, and Aretha Franklin all credit her as an influence to their music.

**"You've got to learn to leave the table when love's no longer being served."**

—Nina Simone



## BLACK HISTORY MONTH: HIGHLIGHTING HUMANS



**Dwayne Glenn McDuffie (February 20, 1962 – February 21, 2011)** was an American writer of comic books and television, known for producing and writing the animated series *Static Shock*, *Damage Control*, *Justice League Unlimited*, and *Ben 10*.

Dwayne loved comics but found them lacking in certain regards: "You only had two types of characters available for children. You had the stupid angry brute and the he's-smart-but-he's-black characters. And they were all colored either this Hershey-bar shade of brown, a sickly looking gray, or purple. I've never seen anyone that's gray or purple before in my life. There was no diversity and almost no accuracy among the characters of color at all."



McDuffie helped develop Marvel's first superhero trading cards.[10] He also scripted stories for Marvel. His first major work was *Damage Control*, a miniseries about the company that shows up between issues and tidies up the mess left by the latest round of superhero/supervillain battles.



# BLACK HISTORY MONTH: INVENTIONS



## **Blood Bank**

Charles Richard Drew became interested in researching blood preservation while studying at Columbia University. Drew discovered a method of separating red blood cells from plasma and storing the two components separately. This new process allowed blood to be stored for more than a week, which was the maximum at that time. Drew documented these findings in a paper that led to the first blood bank.



## **Three-Light Traffic Light**

Garrett Morgan was the first Black person in Cleveland, Ohio, to own a car. After he witnessed a severe car accident at an intersection in the city, he expanded on the current traffic light by adding a “yield” component, warning oncoming drivers of an impending stop.



## **Automatic Gear Shift**

Richard Bowie Spikes (October 2, 1878 – January 22, 1963) was an African-American inventor. The holder of several United States patents, his improvements on existing inventions includes a beer tap, automobile directional signals, an automatic gear shift device based on automatic transmission for automobiles and other motor vehicles, and a safety braking system for trucks and buses.

# HOW TO BUDGET FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Budgeting for Black History Month doesn't need to be complicated or expensive. Here is a step-by-step flow on creating a budget for Black History Month.

**Note:** this process can be used to budget out other culture celebrations.

1

## Create idea map

Start with the end in mind and map out the vibe, feelings, experiences, education, and takeaways you'd like your company or team to experience during BHM. For example, if you'd like your people to be inspired by a speaker and an educational experience - you would add a speaker to your idea map.

2

## Research Cost

Find out what it might cost for each experience you've listed in your idea map. Include the cost of time and the commitment from your people as well. This will be helpful when sharing what you've put together to maximize attendance.

3

## Create budget buckets

Take the low and high ranges from your research and create a small, medium, and a large bucket. This will help you see what the minimum and maximum might be if you did a few things to everything in your idea map.

4

## Eliminate & Present

Use a strategy to remove anything that might not be doable. For example, if you are in the middle of the month and can't secure a speaker - you will eliminate that from your budget. Once you have a realistic idea of your BHM ideas, total the overall cost of everything and present it as a budget.

*The next page has an example for each of these steps.*

# HOW TO BUDGET FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

## Step 1: List of ideas

- Inspirational Speaker
- Interactive Panel
- Virtual or Live Cooking experience
- Share educational facts and content
- Host a trivia game with prizes and giveaways

## Step 2: Research Cost

Speaker: \$500-\$10,000

Cooking Experience \$2,500 - \$8,000

Panel:\$300-\$800/per person

Educational Content: Free - \$4,500

Trivia Game: \$5,000-\$20,000

## Step 3: Review Cost Range

Low: Time - \$8,500

High: \$55,500

## Step 4: Eliminate

Removed: Panel and Trivia Game

## Present

Sample Budget Request to present for approval

Low: Time - \$3,000

High: \$22,500

### Note:

This is one example of how to create a budget and what the cost/investment might be.



## DO'S AND DON'TS

### DO

- Make a budget - exposure in exchange for someone's expertise and energy isn't enough.
- Share Black History throughout the year.
- Create education and experiences for employees.
- Take time to create something meaningful.

### DON'T

- Focus on Black trauma.
- Celebrate out of guilt.
- Ask anyone to speak or present for free.
- Wait until the last minute to plan something.
- Volunteer or assume your Black employees will do something.

## GET STARTED



When you celebrate someone's birthday, the goal is to make the celebration uplifting, encouraging, and exciting.

Celebrating Black History Month and any culture the right way in the workplace is an inclusion and company culture booster.

Your people want and enjoy learning about other cultures, so let this be a starting point.

Pick three ways from the ideas below to incorporate Black History Month throughout February. The goal is to continue this work throughout the year AND start incorporating other cultures.

## LAUNCH BHM WITH OUT-OF-THE-BOX EDUCATION AND STORIES

Humans learn and live through stories and educational experiences.

Create and design a Black History series that curates and collects some of the best and most unique stories within Black culture and communities. Find the hidden education that goes beyond trauma-filled narratives and MLK quotes.

There are many amazing stories directly from Black people, notable heroes, and otherwise.

Consider highlighting someone who isn't well-known. If you're looking for a fantastic workshop, *How To Become A Racist* is a great option.

## HOST A BOOK CLUB (WITH BOOKS FROM BLACK AUTHORS)

Don't feel the need to read the entire book during February. The goal is not to segregate the celebration of Blackness into one month.

Use this as a launching point.

Pace your meeting cadence--I recommend meeting every two weeks or monthly for 30 or 45 mins max.

**Bonus tip:** Children or Syfy books are great book club starters.



## HOST A WATCH PARTY

No time to read? Watch a movie. Pick a movie with a positive message that encourages dialogue.

Here is a list of some of my favorite movies Black inspirational movies:

**Remember the Titans**

(2002) PG

**Hair Love**

(2019) G

**The pursuit of Happiness**

(2006) PG-13

**Soul**

(2020) PG

**Collateral Beauty**

(2016) PG-13

**The Great Debaters**

(2007) PG-13

**Seven Pounds**

(2008) PG-13

**Akeelah and the Bee**

(2006) PG

**Coach Carter**

(2005) PG-13

**Antwon Fisher**

(2002) PG-13

**Black Panther**

(2018) PG-13

**Dreamgirls**

(2006) PG-13

**Lean on Me**

(1989) PG-13

**Black is King**

(2020) TV-14

**Princess and the Frog**

(2009) G

**Queen of Katwe**

(2016) PG

**Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse**

(2018) PG

**The Woman King**

(2022) PG-13

## GET CURIOUS



Black history is American history.

Go past the textbooks and media-proscribed perception; you'll learn a hidden-in-plain-sight world that adds beauty to our nation.

Using this month as a refresher launch point to celebrate all cultures is key.

## COOK TOGETHER

Food connects humanity.

Gumbo is one of my favorite dishes that is perfect for the winter season. It translates over all types of Black cultures, and the concept of a "stew" is culturally universal. It can also be made for all different kinds of food sensitivities.

Just don't do this.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH TRIVIA GAME

Each week send out 4-8 BH Facts that consist of inventions, humans in history, quotes, and more.

On the last week of February, host a trivia game created using the information shared in the previous week.

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION CALENDAR

Now that you have your budget and an idea of how you'd like to celebrate Black History Month within your company - it's time to bring it all together and create a BHM Program to share with your company and let people know what to expect.

This is a themed calendar example. It lays out what each week of BHM will consist of. Depending on your resources, you can remove or add to these weeks. **Don't overdo it. Quality over Quantity is essential.**

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

THEMED WEEKS  
MIX AND MATCH. BE INSPIRED. START SIMPLE.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Week One	Culture x Education					
Week Two	Book or Movie Club Launch					
Week Three	Cooking x Connection					
Week Four	Community Acts					

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You can access the editable version of this calendar [here](#).



# BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION CALENDAR

This is a detailed calendar example. It's a model for the themed weeks with more specificity. If you have a budget, you can use this detailed calendar view to map out the cost for each activity. Not all activities will have a monetary cost - consider the time commitment.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

THEMED WEEK EXAMPLES  
MIX AND MATCH. BE INSPIRED. START SIMPLE.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Education	Origin of BHM	Share Black stories	Human Highlights	Host a speaker	Share a recap	
Book / Movie	Announce book or movie	Share Black stories	Human Highlights	Kickoff Launch Mtg.	Share a recap	
Cooking +	Share Black stories		Human Highlights		Cooking Workshop	
Community	Highlight Black Businesses	Share Community Stories	Human Highlights	Give. Serve. Donate.	Share a recap	

CULTURECIRCLE.CO + HUMANITYPOWER.CO

You can access the editable version of this calendar [here](#).

## GETTING STARTED (CONTINUED)

I wrote this guide because **I did not like BHM growing up**. It was the same narrative; you were slaves, MLK and the dude that invented Peanut Butter (which he didn't, BTW).

I wrote this guide to **help companies that want to celebrate BHM do it the right way**.

I wrote this guide for my kids, who **will appreciate the alternative to the school programming** that tends to highlight traumatic events and the regurgitated obvious.

I wrote this guide for you. **Human to Human** because while this is focused on BHM, it is the same process and formula I would share to celebrate all cultures.

**Celebrations don't need to be expensive or overcomplicated. This guide provides you with everything you need to celebrate BHM.**

**Don't have a budget - fine.** Extract the educational stories in the Highlighting Humans section, do a bit more research, and share one Human a week with your company.

**Have a budget - great.** Do the free stuff, AND bring in an inspirational Black speaker. The talk should be inspirational, educational, and informative on whatever topic lights that speaker up.

## GETTING STARTED (CONTINUED)

**The best part about this guide is that it can be applied to any culture you want to celebrate next.**

Make sure you document what went well, gather feedback, what you'd change and what you'd like to do again and again.

You will have a full-on Culture Celebrations Program that will enrich your company culture through unity, curiosity, learning, and community.

My hope is that with the highs and lows of the Black culture, this guide creates a bridge to bring us all closer together - **highlighting and celebrating humans and a culture that has overcome great odds and have done extraordinary things.**

**CONGRATULATIONS YOU ARE ALL SET TO  
CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH AND BEYOND!**

**May you live long and prosper.**

**With Gratitude,  
Charisse**

*Something missing? Notice a typo? Find this guide helpful?  
Send us an email: [hello@culturecircle.co](mailto:hello@culturecircle.co).*





**GOT CULTURE GOALS?**

**LET'S TALK.**

**HELLO.**

**WE'RE CULTURE CIRCLE A  
BOUTIQUE CULTURE PARTNER  
THAT CREATES HEALTHY AND  
INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES FOR  
CULTURE-CONSCIOUS  
COMPANIES.**



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**WHAT'S WITH THE  
PINEAPPLE?**

**FIND OUT HERE.**

