

# Bridge DEIJ Newsletter

Dear Bridge Community,

It's December and the holiday season is well under way!

The holiday traditions, rituals, and cultural or religious practices that we engage can be very important to our children. These events often bring together loved ones, generate positive memories, and affirm various aspects of a child's identity. These are key factors in building a child's self-image and self-esteem, as well as providing them with a sense of belonging.

As you engage in your family holiday traditions this winter, we invite you to take time learn with your child about traditions that are different from your own. Learning about diverse cultures can help a child not only appreciate their own culture but also increase their awareness of the world around them and foster respect for differences.

Below you'll find some ideas on how you might do this.

## Celebrating & Learning during the Holiday Season

### Notice the diversity within your own traditions

Holiday traditions with the same name can look very different in different cultures and even in different families. For example, Christmas dinner in the United States typically features a turkey or ham and is eaten on Christmas Day. But in Italy, the most elaborate meal is typically eaten on Christmas Eve, and it usually features seafood, not meat. Do you know anyone of Italian origin who keeps this tradition? What's more, Italian kids are especially lucky to get presents from two sources: Santa Claus and *La Befana* – a witch who leaves gifts to be discovered on Epiphany morning, in early January! Learning about differences like this can be engaging for young kids and can help them understand the great diversity that exists within the traditions they call their own.



## Save the Date

### December 10

Vermont Symphony Orchestra: Holiday Pops with guest conductor Anthony Parnter, one of the few black conductors in the U.S. At the Flynn Theatre in Burlington, 7:30 pm. [Sunday matinee in Rutland at the Paramount on December 11<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm.]

### December 13

Soweto Gospel Choir concert "Hope – It's Been a Long Time Coming." This performance by the three-time Grammy-winning choir commemorates South Africa's Freedom Movement and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. The second act also includes holiday songs. Paramount Theatre in Rutland, 7:30 pm.

## Learn about and raise awareness about different traditions

During the holiday season, we can also remind our children that not everyone celebrates the same holidays as they do. This is a great time to involve kids in learning by checking out books from the library (or jointly seeking out other reliable sources of information) that correctly educate about diverse traditions. Many religious beliefs are present in our community -- Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Agnosticism, Atheism, and others. And, many holidays are celebrated over the winter season. These include but are not limited to: Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Las Posadas, Krampusnacht, St. Nicholas Day, Santa Lucia, Winter Solstice, Christmas, Boxing Day, and the Lunar New Year.

## Explore Common Themes

Some common themes among diverse traditions are light, peace, resilience, music and song, preparing and sharing special food, taking time to reflect or pray, and coming together with family and loved ones.

## Express Positive Interest in and Teach Respect for Diverse Traditions

We can do this by saying things like "This is a holiday our family doesn't celebrate. Isn't it great that there are so many different ways families can show each other that they love each other?". When we speak about difference in a positive way with our children, it can help them better understand themselves as well as provide them with crucial skills for interacting with others. It can help them approach people who are different from them with self-confidence, curiosity, openness, empathy, and kindness. It can help them understand that there might be multiple ways to view one thing. It is work toward helping them grow into thoughtful, compassionate, and well-rounded adults -- and it is work toward making our future communities better.

*Happy Holidays to you all.*



### Podcast Roundup: Diversity in VT explored on "Brave Little State"

([www.vermontpublic.org/podcast/brave-little-state](http://www.vermontpublic.org/podcast/brave-little-state))

#### [What's the Asian American Experience Like in Vermont?](#)

#### [How did VT Profit From Slavery?](#)

#### [Odanak First Nation's Mali Obomsawin tells Indigenous stories through music](#)

#### [A history of Jewish life in Vermont, in 5 chapters](#)

#### [Black Comfort, or Lack Thereof, in Vermont](#)

#### [How to Support Vermonters of Color: An Illustrated Guide](#)