

A G.I.R.L. Journey

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Significance of World Thinking Day

A celebration unique to Girl Scouts, the significance of World Thinking Day is reflected upon by Girl Scouts of Central & Western Massachusetts Board Members Bonnie Walker and Carla Carten for this installment of *A G.I.R.L. Journey*.

World Thinking Day is a unique and special Girl Scout holiday celebrated each year on February 22. It's a time when we remember we are part of a worldwide movement as girls celebrate international friendship in camaraderie with Girl Guides and Girl Scouts around the globe. Locally, Girl Scouts across central and western Massachusetts engage in multicultural celebrations to learn about a country's history, customs and people as they develop awareness about their sisters around the world, explore cultural similarities and differences, and learn about issues that girls and women everywhere face. The 2020 World Thinking day theme is **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**.

Nonprofit organizations, such as the Girl Scouts, who specifically support girls and young women, are created to improve society. As such, from a moral and market perspective they should be diverse, inclusive, and equitable; creating spaces for girls of all backgrounds to feel an integrated sense of belonging. The Girl Scouts mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. To achieve this mission, Girls Scouts focus giving girls and young women opportunities to participate in adventure and outdoor skills, entrepreneurship, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), and financial literacy, and through these opportunities their individuality is valued and celebrated. A mindfulness for diversity, equity, and inclusion, allows for their differing needs to be met as they develop important skills and competencies that will empower them to thrive in an ever changing, diverse and competitive world. Celebrating diversity and supporting equity and inclusion in Girl Scouts, supports girls to become competent and confident global citizens with the know-how to navigate in a global economy.

The month of February includes several month-long observances that pointedly support diversity, equity and inclusion. They are:

- **Black History Month:** In February, celebrate the accomplishments of Black Americans, past and present.
- **National youth leadership month:** This celebration aims to encourage young leaders to get involved in their community.

The month of February also focuses on health and wellbeing paying particular attention to underrepresented & underserved populations regarding social justice and social services in health care. These populations include women, people of color, and those of low socio-economic status:

- **American Heart Month:** Hosted by the American Heart Association. Many local medical centers have activities and health fairs, including walks and "Go Red for Women," a movement to end heart disease and stroke in women.
- **National Children's Dental Health Month:** Hosted by the American Dental Association. Use this month as a good time to discuss good oral care habits.
- **Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month:** Discuss this important topic with your sons and daughters.

We encourage you to take time this month to celebrate **World Thinking Day** and to engage in the other aforementioned month-long observances. We also ask you to think critically about how social justice relates to these celebrations. In the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., *"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."* And from the Founder of the Girl Scouts, *"To put yourself in another's place requires real imagination, but by doing so each Girl Scout will be able to love among others happily."* -Juliette Gordon Low



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