



February 2022

Hello, colleagues and friends,

Black History Month marks a time to reflect on the past and legacies of Black and African American people in the United States and their rich cultures and ancestry. It began as “Negro History Week” in 1926 by scholar [Carter G. Woodson](#). Black students and educators at Kent State University grew the celebration to a full month in 1970, and each U.S. president since 1976 has designated February as Black History Month. To learn more about the origins and purpose of this commemorative month, watch this three-minute captioned [YouTube video](#).

During February and always, it is important to acknowledge collective struggles rooted in systemic racism but also to recognize the Black joy that family, community, resilience, healing, and faith have nurtured.

[Gloria Oladipo shares:](#)

For me, Black joy is an opportunity to fully be within myself, to live beyond the hate and abuse I receive living as a Black woman. Black joy reminds me that it deserves a place outside of suffering. It’s laughing with my Black friends and cooking. Black joy is loving on myself. It is the feeling of pride for an ancestor’s accomplishments in the past and how it energizes. Black joy allows me to enjoy the fullness of what Blackness is, of what Blackness could be. It’s a rebuttal to the world’s demand that Black people hurt.

Let Oladipo’s words ignite our hearts.

Mental, physical, and emotional wellness are critical to Black joy and strong communities. The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) focuses on the importance of [Black Health and Wellness](#) as a theme for 2022, and offers books, websites, podcasts, videos, and other materials on “activities, rituals and initiatives that Black communities have done to be well.” Additionally, ASALH offers the 2022 Black History Month [Virtual Festival](#).

We welcome you to elevate Black joy, health, and happiness during this celebratory month.

Additional Resources

Learn about Black history, support Black-owned businesses, donate to Black-centered organizations, and research and recognize prominent Black figures.

- Know your history:
  - [Black History Landmarks in Washington](#)
  - [Blackpast.org](#)
- Read books from the list of “100 greatest books ever written by African American women” on [Zora](#).
- Consider donating to these organizations: [blackyouthproject](#); [NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund](#); [Black Lives Matter](#); and [National Urban League](#).

In solidarity,  
Ha, Melissa, and Christina