

Calendar of Annual Human Rights Observances

This calendar is a compendium of information related to human rights oriented observances compiled by the City of Morgantown Human Right Commission. Its resources are several calendars including those developed by the Anti-Defamation League, Compassio, Disabled World List of Awareness Days, National Wellness Institute, US National Health Service, United Nations Observance Calendar, and members of the Morgantown Human Rights Commission.

JANUARY

- January 18 Day **World Religion Day** – Observance to proclaim the oneness of religion and the belief that world religion will unify the peoples of the earth.
- January 19 Third Monday **Birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** – Established in 1983 and observed for the first time on January 20, 1986. Also known as **King Service Day** – Federal legislation signed in 1994 challenged Americans to transform the King holiday into a day of citizen action volunteer service.
- January 27 **Holocaust Memorial Day** - Annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust coinciding with the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp in 1945. The United Nations urges all its member states to honor Nazi era victims and to develop education programs to help prevent future genocides.

FEBRUARY

- Month **Black History Month** – Celebrates Black History and African American culture in the United States.
- February 1-7 Week **World Interfaith Harmony Week**
- February 14 Day **Race Relations Day** – A day designated by the National Council of Churches in recognition of the importance of interracial relations and learning.
- February 15 **Susan B. Anthony Day** - Birthday of Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906), a pioneer in the Women’s Rights Movement.
- February 20 **World Day of Social Justice** – Recognition of the imperative for tackling issues such as poverty, exclusion and unemployment.

MARCH

- Month **National Women’s History Month** – Honors women as significant agents of change.
- March 8 Day **International Women’s Day** – Celebration of the economic, political, and social achievements of women worldwide. Recognition of need for empowering women to meet their health and family planning needs as central to realizing greater equality. With access to education, economic opportunity, and quality health care, healthier mothers can have healthier babies, economic gains, and help create less pressure on our planet’s natural resources.

March 21 **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination** – Call to action to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination worldwide.

International Forest Day – Call for awareness of the importance of forests in protecting air quality, water retention, plants for pharmaceuticals, habitat for birds and other wildlife – all of which provide a balance for survival of all.

March 22 **World Water Day** – Calls for awareness of how essential potable water is to the rights of all people in West Virginia and worldwide.

March 31 **Cesar Chavez Day** – Honors Mexican American farm worker. Labor leader, and activist Cesar Chavez (1927- 1993) who was a nationally respected voice of social justice.

APRIL

Month **National Child Abuse Prevention Month** – A time to emphasize the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect and to promote the social and emotional well-being of children and families.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month - A month to promote awareness of sexual assault, harassment, or other abuse to increase prevention efforts to protect all people of all ages.

April 1 Day **Youth Homelessness Matters Day** – Part of a campaign to create brighter futures for young people who have faced homelessness and to show them they have the power and opportunity to become whatever they put their minds to.

April 7 **World Health Day** – Calls for an awareness that without nurture and protection of health, persons are vulnerable to economic and social hardship and inability to fully utilize on engage in human rights.

April 16 **Holocaust Remembrance Day** – Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising – Seeks to commemorate the Holocaust by remembering and honoring the victims of the Holocaust which include six million Jews, thousands of Russian gypsies, homosexuals, persons with disabilities, and others.

MAY

Month **Older Americans Month** – Celebrates progress in protection of older in the United States and recognizes the importance of end-of-life independence and care for older adults.

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month – Recognizes the contributions and celebrates the culture of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States.

May 1 Day **International Worker’s Day** – Also known as May Day, it celebrates the social and economic achievements of workers worldwide. The day commemorates the Haymarket Riot of 1886 in Chicago, in which police and protesters clashed following a worker’s strike for an eight-hour day.

May 3 **World Press Freedom Day** – Serves as an occasion to inform the public of violations of the right to freedom of expression and as a reminder that many journalists brave death or jail to bring people their daily news.

May 15 **International Day of Families** – Celebration of two or more persons providing a continuity of support for each other usually in terms of affection, nurture, security and protection.

May 21 **World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development** – Recognizes cultural diversity as a source of innovation, exchange, and creativity, as well as the obligation to create a more peaceful and equitable society based on mutual respect.

JUNE

Month **LGBT Pride Month** – Commemorates the anniversary of the June 28, 1969 Stonewall riot in New York City, the incident that initiated the modern gay rights movement in the United States. LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) Pride Day is the last Sunday in June.

June 1 Day **Stand for Children Day** – A day to emphasize the importance of standing up for children by supporting systemic change and increased funding for public education.

June 5 **World Environment Day** – Observance promoting an awareness of the impact of environmental conditions on individual and community well-being and food sources which make life possible for current and future generations.

June 8 **World Oceans Day** – Call for awareness of the importance of protecting oceans from pollution and rising sea levels to prevent individuals and entire communities from loss of property, housing, livelihood and food supplies.

June 12 **Loving Day** – Observes the anniversary of the 1967 United States Supreme Court decision *Loving v. Virginia* which struck down the miscegenation laws in 16 states barring interracial marriage.

June 14 **Race Unity Day** – Observance promoting racial harmony and understanding and the essential unity of humanity.

June 19 **Juneteenth** – Originally commemorating the announcement of the abolition of slavery in Texas in 1865, it is now celebrated throughout the United States to honor African-American freedom and achievement.

June 20 **World Refugee Day** – Raises awareness about the plight of refugees and displaced persons.

June 26 **United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture** - A day to remind people that human torture is not only unacceptable – it is also a crime and a universal violation of a human right..

JULY

- July 4 Day **Independence Day** – Anniversary of the United States Declaration of Independence in 1776 which led to the creation of a new union and new rights for citizens.
- July 11 **World Population Day** – Emphasizes awareness that the world’s #1 problem is too many people using too many resources and creating too much unsustainable waste. Excesses impact current climate, energy, and support systems.
- July 26 **ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Day** – Commemorates the 1990 signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which guarantees equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

AUGUST

- August 6 Day **National Night Out** – Marks the importance of collaborative efforts in reducing crime and for strengthening neighborhood relationships which help prevent crime and protect persons from criminal activity.
- August 9 **International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples** – Celebrates the richness of indigenous cultures and recognizes the challenges indigenous peoples face today, ranging from poverty and disease to dispossession, discrimination, and denial of basic human rights.
- August 12 **International Youth Day** – Celebrates young people and the integral role they play to create a world fit for children.
- August 23 **International Day for the Remembrance of Slave Trade and Its Abolition** – Memorializes the tragedy of the transatlantic slave trade, coinciding with the anniversary of the uprising in Santa Domingo (today Haiti and the Dominican Republic) that initiated its abolition. Tragically other forms of slavery still persist today.
- August 30 **International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearance** – A day to promote taking a stand against secret imprisonment, forced disappearance and abduction and placing persons in any situation without access to relatives and/or legal representation.

SEPTEMBER

- September 7 Day **Labor Day** – Celebrates the historic struggles of workers in the United States to achieve safer working conditions, shorter hours, and humane restrictions on child labor while contributing to productive economies.
- September 8 **International Literacy Day** – Supports awareness of the importance of persons being able to read and write in order to participate in today’s economic, legal, health and social environments.
- September 17 **Constitution Day and Citizenship Day** – Commemorates the ratification in 1787 of the United States Constitution, the organization of government, and rights of citizenship. Also honors all who have become United States citizens.

September 21

International Day of Peace – Calls for continual working for peace and reduction of use of violence in attempting to solve problems among individuals and all levels of human interaction.

OCTOBER

Month

LGBT History Month – Marks and celebrates the lives and achievements of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in the United States.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month – A time for celebrating the strength of battered women and their children and for connecting those working to end violence against women and children.

National Crime Prevention Month - Special awareness for the practice of crime prevention as well as victimization, volunteerism, and the need to create safer more connected neighborhoods and communities.

October 1 Day

International Day of Older Persons – Appreciates the contributions which older persons in diverse situations make to their communities and recognizes the need for opportunities for willing and capable persons of advanced age to participate in and be celebrated for their action in society.

October 12

Indigenous People Day (Native American Day) – Celebrates and honors Native American history and culture.

October 15

World Food Day – A day for awareness of the need for greater equity in access to food production and distribution locally, statewide, nationally and internationally.

October 17

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty Day – Call to action for the eradication of poverty and destitution worldwide.

October 24

United Nations Day – Commemorates the founding of the United Nations in 1945.

October 31

World Cities Day – “The human future is largely an urban future. We must get right reduction of greenhouse emissions, strengthening resilience, ensuring basic services such as water and sanitation, and designing safe public streets and spaces for all to share.”(UN Sec.Gen.)

NOVEMBER

Month

Native American Heritage Month – Celebrates and honors the history and culture of Native Americans in the United States.

November 2 Day

International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists – A day to emphasize that information is essential for decision making whether it be economic, social or political. Information is the cornerstone for democracy, good government and effective institutions. During the past decade 700 journalists have been killed worldwide.

November 3		Election Day – A day set by United States law for citizens to exercise the right to vote in the election of public officials.
November 9		Day against Racism – A call for global action against intolerance and its attendant violence as well as enhancement of communal and national tolerance, fairness, and mutual respect.
November 13		World Kindness Day – Calls for special deliberate efforts to treat others with kindness and even to exceed the rights which people can expect or hope to be honored in their relationships with others.
November 16		International Day for Tolerance – Emphasizes the dangers of intolerance and is a call for action for the advancement of human welfare, freedom, and progress everywhere, as well as a day to encourage tolerance, respect dialogue, and cooperation among different cultures and peoples.
November 20		Universal Children’s Day – The world-wide day for promoting mutual exchange and understanding among children and for initiating action to benefit and promote the welfare of the world’s children.
November 25		International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women – A day for emphasizing awareness that violence against women is a preventable human rights violation based on discrimination against women and a perception of inequalities between men and women.
November 26		Thanksgiving Day – Following a 19 th Century tradition, this day commemorates the Pilgrim’s harvest feast in the autumn of 1621 and their successful interdependence with Native Americans making the feast possible.
DECEMBER		
December 2	Day	International Day for the Abolition of Slavery – Slavery is not just history but affects over 30 million persons throughout the world today. Its roots are in discrimination, poverty and indebtedness, vulnerability, and the rule of law.
December 3		International Day of Disabled Persons – Raises awareness about persons with disabilities in order to improve their lives and provide them with equal opportunity.
December 10		International Human Rights Day – On this day in 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
December 16		Bill of Rights Day – Commemorates the signing into law of the ten original amendments of the United States Constitution in 1791 – including the First Amendment Rights of religion, association, speech, petition, and press.
December 18		International Migrants Day – A day to affirm commitment to diverse and open societies which provide opportunities and lives of dignity for all migrants.