

PEER BIAS LEADERS NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2021

Welcome to the Peer Bias Leaders Newsletter. We are the Peer Bias Leaders, a student-led equity and inclusivity group at Haddonfield Memorial High School. Each month, we plan to release a monthly newsletter curated by students discussing the importance of equity through books, articles, discussion topics, and more. With this newsletter, we hope to foster conversations and self-education that act as the foundation for change within our community.

This Month, we would like to focus on Black History Month, which takes place during the month of February to honor the lives, perseverance, and achievements of the African American community. Throughout our country's history, Black Americans have continued to rise from the shackles of oppression and injustice to advance the African American community along with the world as a whole. We invite you to now, as well as the entire year, to learn more about the history, accomplishments, and legacy of Black Americans.

- Mehki Rippey, President of the Peer Bias Leaders

Topic: Black History Month

Discussion Topics:

- Featured Figures
 - **Madam CJ Walker** (1867-1919): the first female self-made millionaire. She created a line of African American hair products after suffering from a scalp ailment that resulted in her own hair loss. She developed and grew her business by traveling across the country to showcase her products, and she was able to give thousands of African American women opportunities and economic growth independence. She was also a philanthropist and made significant contributions to the African American YMCA and the NAACP's anti-lynching fund. Madam CJ Walker was a strong leader who used her talents to support and enrich the African American community.
 - **Charles Richard Drew** (1904-1950): Drew made major contributions to modern blood banking practices and blood transfusions. Born in 1904, Drew would first find interest in biology while studying at Amherst College, and then became the first Black student to earn a medical doctorate at Columbia University. At Columbia, Drew would lead work in separating plasma from blood, which allowed donated blood to be stored for a week. This breakthrough would be pivotal for doctors treating injured soldiers during WWII; Drew also led a program that transported blood and plasma to Great Britain while under attack by Germany, which saved numerous lives. After WWII, Drew taught at Howard University to further increase the visibility of African Americans within the medical industry. The research of Charles Richard Drew, also known as "the father of the blood bank," would go on to save countless lives to this day.

- **Daisy Bates** (1914-1999): a civil rights activist and journalist. She and her husband founded the Arkansas State Press, a weekly Black newspaper that advocated for civil rights. She became the president of the Arkansas chapter of the NAACP and used her newspaper to expose schools that refused to desegregate after the federal mandate was passed. She organized the Little Rock Nine and worked hard to protect them from protestors' violence. Her work was very important in ensuring that Black children could have educational opportunities that would allow them to succeed in society, and she and her husband were influential in the civil rights movement overall.
- Photography's Influence
 - Photojournalism is an important piece of Black history, as impactful photographs help capture the American experience. Black photographers like [Gordon Parks](#) (1912-2006), [James Van Der Zee](#) (1886-1983), and [Carrie Mae Weems](#) (1953-) helped shape American history. Examples of each of their work are shown below. To see more photos, click on the links above.



Gordon Parks



James Van Der Zee



Carrie Mae Weems

Reading

- [Between the World and Me](#) by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- [Poems](#)
 - Scroll down to view featured poems that explore the Black experience
 - Includes works from Maya Angelou, Langston Hughes, and Margaret Walker.

Podcast of the Month

- [Eight Podcasts to Deepen Your Knowledge of Black History](#)
 - [12 Podcasts About The African American Experience For Black History Month And Beyond](#)
- These are both lists of podcasts to listen to during Black History Month to learn more about black history and the black experience in America. The Vanity Fair article features podcasts that are more about black history, and the Forbes article has ones that are more about the black experience in today's world. Examples of podcasts from these lists include “Still Processing” a podcast by two New York Times writers about how they experience today’s media and popculture, and “Blackbelt Voices,” which focuses on black history by interviewing top scholars and telling first person experiences of black people in the South.

Resources

- [Teaching Children About Black History](#)
- [Black History Month Resource Guide for Educators and Families – Center for Racial Justice in Education](#): A comprehensive page of resources for Black history month in all contexts.
- [TED Talk: Black History is American History: Okalani Dawkins](#): In this speech, Okalani Dawkins highlights the importance of incorporating Black stories into our nation’s history curriculum. She explains that, although fighting for civil rights is incredibly important, it’s also important to look at Black contributions in other fields, like science and literature, to create a more whole picture of the Black experience.
- [Knowing the Past Opens the Door to the Future: The Continuing Importance of Black History Month](#): A letter from the director of the Smithsonian Institute, Lonnie Bunch, on the importance of Black history month in society.

Quote of the Month: "Black history is American history" ~Morgan Freeman

