



# DEI *Perspectives*

## Human Rights Month

***By: Shawanda Smith, member support specialist and DEI Champion***

For me, Human Rights Month is a reminder of how far we have come and how much farther we must go. It calls up memories of historic struggles and the courage of leaders like Nelson Mandela and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., whose bravery paved the way for the freedoms I enjoy today. Human Rights Month is a time dedicated to reflecting on the importance of human rights and the ongoing efforts to safeguard the freedoms and dignities of individuals worldwide. While the themes of Human Rights Month can vary each year, the underlying message remains the same: the protection of fundamental freedoms is essential to achieving peace, justice and dignity for all people.

The observance culminates on December 10, Human Rights Day, which commemorates the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. This momentous declaration set forth fundamental rights that all people are entitled to, regardless of nationality, ethnicity or religion. The UDHR laid groundwork for international human rights standards, encompassing the right to life, liberty and security. It was a groundbreaking declaration that, though not legally binding, has inspired treaties, laws and movements around the world.

While Human Rights Day serves as the focal point of the month-long observance, Human Rights Month provides an opportunity for deeper reflection on both the progress made and the work still needed to ensure rights for all. It is a time for governments, educational institutions and individuals alike to engage in discussions about human rights issues, raise awareness and address violations.

Human Rights Month serves as a powerful reminder of our shared responsibility to uphold human dignity, equality and freedom, transcending boundaries of nationality, culture and identity. Human rights are not just abstract principles to us; they represent a life free from oppression, discrimination and injustice. We honor activists, scholars, artists and everyday people who push back against inequality and refuse to settle for anything less than full dignity and justice. In the face of adversity, we find ways to thrive, innovate and inspire worth and humanity.

**As we move forward, let Human Rights Month serve as both a call to action and a reminder that the fight for human dignity and equality is ongoing and requires the engagement of all of us.**

