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## Welcome to our Black History Month newsletter!

October in the UK marks Black History Month, a time to acknowledge and reflect on the many contributions, achievements and untold stories of Black people throughout history.

There is so much to say and to share! This year, we have worked hard with our Anti-Racism Network to focus on topics that we hope you will find interesting, relevant, and maybe discover a great person or two that you didn't know before.

Our aim for Black History Month 2021 is to shout loudly about Black excellence in lots of different fields, as well as continue to increase awareness of current issues. In this year's newsletter you'll find articles on champions in sport, incredible inventors, a reflection on our work over the last year, a celebration of names & heritage, as well as the official Black History Month theme 'Proud to Be'.

Throughout all the topics, there are stories and contributions from some of our incredible staff and people we support. We are so proud to share their experiences and insight. We hope you enjoy reading them just as much, and can take something away from it too.

***So, without further ado, let's get started! We hope very much that you enjoy the newsletter and would love to hear what you think, as well as all the other ways you've been celebrating Black History Month this year. Email us at [marketing@creativesupport.co.uk](mailto:marketing@creativesupport.co.uk) and don't forget to check out our social media for more stories throughout the month!***

***(Above) Creative Support colleagues, Victoria, Dionne, Errol, Precious, Norma, Grant and Kizzy outside head office.***



# The History of Black History Month

*Akyaaba Addai-Sebo,  
organiser of the UK's first  
Black History Month.*

**Every October marks Black History Month in the UK, but do you know how it all began?**

Nowadays, Black History Month is a widely celebrated and acknowledged time of the year where people come together to recognise and appreciate Black people's contributions to society. In the UK, Black History Month encourages people to learn more about Britain's colonial history, which is often not taught in school.

Black History Month predates the UK's celebration however, and originated in the United States. The first official Black History Month took place from 2nd January to 28th February 1970, but it has an even earlier history than this. In 1926, academic and historian Dr Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (which Dr Woodson founded) created 'Negro History Week'. Many consider this

the first version of Black History Month – it created a ripple effect leading to the official Black History Month as we know it today.

You'll also notice that while Black History Month is celebrated in October in the UK, it's celebrated in February in the United States. In America, they chose February because Dr Woodson and ASAALH wanted to mark the birthdays of former President Abraham Lincoln, and incredible abolitionist and writer Frederick Douglass. Both of whom made huge contributions to Black liberation and equality during their lifetimes.

Dr Woodson explained the importance of celebrating Black history, and said that "if race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated."

Black History Month in the more modern sense of what we know now was first proposed in February 1969 by Black academics and the Black United Students, a student organisation at Kent State University. Over the following six years, Black History Month spread across the United States and was being celebrated in universities, community centres, and centres of Black culture.

**"If race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated"**

**– Dr Carter G. Woodson**

In 1976, then – President Gerald Ford officially recognised Black History Month during the United States Bicentennial celebration.

Black History Month in the UK was first officially celebrated 11 years later in 1987, which coincided with the 150th anniversary of Caribbean emancipation of slavery and the 25th anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity. Ghanaian analyst and activist Akyaaba Addai-Sebo played a huge role in organising the UK's first Black History Month. Addai-Sebo came to the UK in 1984 when he sought refuge from political persecution during the regime of Jerry John Rawlings. He said leaving Ghana during that time meant he was "therefore absorbed in community activism right on my arrival."

In an interview with the UK Black History Month organisation in 2017, Addai-Sebo said: "I was stirred up in the mid 1980s by the identity crisis that Black children faced. A crisis of identity faced us squarely despite the Race Awareness campaigns of the Greater London Council and the

Inner London Education Authority. More had to be done and so I conceived an annual celebration of the contributions of Africa, Africans, and people of African descent to world civilisation."

Addai-Sebo said that they settled on October rather than February for the UK Black History Month so that "children were fresh after the long summer vacation and had less to worry about exams and tests and the camaraderie was stronger as they shared experiences. Self – pride is the catalyst for achievement and there is no greater 'truth' than knowing yourself."

Black History Month has been celebrated across the UK ever since, with more and more people celebrating each year. It is an important time of the year where we can spend time learning more about the contributions of Black, African, and Caribbean people so we can better appreciate and understand each other. Celebrating Black History Month doesn't only have to be in October either – taking the opportunity to learn more about Black history throughout the year and listening to our Black colleagues, service users, friends, and family is so important and will go some way to making society a more equal and appreciative place.

If you would like to read more about anything included in this article, please click on the links below:

[Black History Month – Interview with Akyaaba Addai Sebo](#)

[BBC – What is Black History Month and why does it matter?](#)

[The Guardian – Articles related to Black History Month](#)

[Black History Month UK](#)

# BIM2021

DIG DEEPER, LOOK CLOSER, THINK BIGGER



# Black excellence in sport

The world of sport is incredibly diverse, with many Black people being the leaders in their field, from athletics, football, tennis to gymnastics. However, racism & discrimination are a very real part of the sporting world.

2021 has been a huge year for sport, with both the Euros and the Olympics finally being able to go ahead after being postponed due to COVID lockdowns. Whilst we have relished being able to celebrate the sports we love again, this year has also highlighted a darker side of sport. There has been racial abuse faced by players, pressures on mental health, problematic practice of testosterone testing in women's sport, and substantial disparity of treatment.

The impact of these systematic problems disproportionately impact Black people, as well as the lack of representation in some sports and



**Marcus Rashford (above) Manchester Uniteds star forward and FareShare ambassador**

on Federation Boards. For example, in July 2021, the international swimming federation (FINA) decided to ban the use of Soul Caps (swim caps designed for Afro hair) at the Tokyo Olympics. Black sports people are also feeling able to speak out about their experiences of discrimination, for example in the poignant documentary by Anton Ferdinand (Football, racism & me on BBC iPlayer).

It is incredibly important that we make space to celebrate the achievements of Black athletes, both inside and outside of their sports, so here we have highlighted some fantastic Black British sporting heroes, as well as some from around the world:

## Football

One British sports star who has become an inspiration both on and off the pitch is Marcus Rashford. He made his Manchester United debut in 2016 where he scored two goals, making him the team's youngest ever scorer in a European competition. Since then, he has made his mark at the football club and is a key player for England.

Off the pitch, Rashford has used his newfound fame to enact positive change and stand up for vulnerable people. In 2019, he set up the 'In The Box' campaign with Selfridges to give out boxes with essential items to people who are homeless. Rashford and his mum visited homeless shelters to give out the boxes, and sent some to a children's home in his grandma's home country of Saint Kitts and Nevis in the Caribbean.

Then, when the UK entered its first lockdown in March 2020, Rashford teamed up with the poverty and food waste charity FareShare to give out meals to children who were missing free school meals, breakfast clubs, and food at community centres. With Rashford's help, the charity raised over £20 million to provide over four million meals to children across the UK. Following this, he wrote a letter to the Government calling on them to end UK child poverty, of which he personally

experienced. Rashford received an MBE in October 2020 for his incredible charity work.

Despite all of this, Rashford became subject to a torrent of racial abuse following the Euro 2020 final when he missed a penalty for England. Himself and teammates Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka were viciously attacked on social media for missing the penalties, with many of the posts making racist comments and using vile language. Twitter revealed that people from the UK had 'by far' sent the most abusive, racist tweets. A mural of Rashford in Manchester was vandalised following the defeat, before being repainted and covered in supportive messages. Hundreds of people gathered outside by the artwork, taking the knee in an anti-racism protest and showing an overwhelming stand of solidarity.

It's important to be aware that however accomplished Black players become, they still face this double standard. They remain vulnerable to overt racist abuse as well as indirect racism, and this has a hugely negative impact.

## Twitter revealed that people from the UK had 'by far' sent the most abusive, racist tweets to the footballers

The 2020 Sporting Equals Survey showed that 83% of Black and minority ethnic players have experienced racism in British sport. Sporting Equals has called on all publically funded sports organisations to have at least 20% Black, Asian, and minority ethnic representation on their boards.

## Formula One

In the world of Formula One Sir Lewis Hamilton (MBE) is one of the most prominent figures. Hamilton holds the joint record for seven World Drivers' Championship titles, as well as the record for the most wins, pole positions, and podium finishers. But he remains the only Black driver to race in Formula One, and he has previously criticised the lack of diversity. Hamilton said "Kids, people, there are so many jobs in this sport of which anybody, no matter your ethnicity or background, can make it and fit in." In 2020,



**Lewis Hamilton, Formula One world champion**

he established The Hamilton Commission, using engineering to help young Black people engage with science, technology, engineering and maths. He has also launched his own charity, Mission 44, to support young people from underrepresented groups to succeed in education and employment.

## Olympics

In the Olympics, Black British athletes have represented the UK and showed their incredible talents on the world stage for over one hundred years. The first Black British Olympian was Harry Edward, who won a bronze in both the 100m and 200m at the 1920 Olympic Games in Antwerp. Edward was born and raised in Germany, and was held as a prisoner of war in an internment camp between 1915-1918. When he was released, he emigrated to the UK and restarted his athletic career, becoming the first Black British person to be awarded an Olympic medal two years later.

Since Harry Edward, there have been an incredible amount of Black British Olympians. One such person is the incredible Sir Mo Farah, a double-double gold-winning long distance runner who is the most decorated athlete in British history! He holds national and world records, with ten global titles. He won double gold in London 2012 and in Rio 2016, he is the most successful British track athlete in modern Olympic history.

Another astounding Olympian is Nicola Adams (OBE), a professional boxer who retired in 2019 with an undefeated record. She became the first female boxer to become an Olympic champion after winning gold in the London games in 2012. As of 27 May 2016, Adams was the reigning





**Nicola Adams, undefeated gold medal Olympian**

Olympic, World and European Games champion and won the entire set of amateur championships available to her: Olympic, Commonwealth, and European Games titles, and the World, European, and European Championships. She became the first openly LGBTQ+ person to win an Olympic boxing gold medal after her 2012 win.

Simone Biles is a hugely successful American gymnast, and at just 24 years old is currently tied as the most decorated gymnast of all time. She has 32 Olympic and World Championship medals. There are 4 entries in the sport's rule book named after her, and she is completing moves so difficult that no other gymnast will attempt them. This year, Biles made headlines after withdrawing

from the 2020 Olympics to focus on her mental health. This inspirational and highly respectable decision has paved the way for conversations about mental health.

However, there are certain rules which disproportionately impact Black athletes and create barriers to.

At the Olympic Games this year, Namibian athletes Christine Mboma and Beatrice Masilingi were barred from the 400m in Tokyo because their testosterone levels were naturally "too high". These rules only apply to certain events and they were forced to change their entries to compete in the 200m. Testosterone is a naturally-produced hormone that is typically higher in men, but everyone has varying levels. Hormone testing only happens for female athletes, and if their levels are 'too high' they are not allowed to take part unless they agree to medication or surgery.

The runners who are affected by these rules are mostly from African countries, including all three women who won medals at the 2016 Olympics. Dr Nana Adom-Aboagye, a research fellow at Stellenbosch University, accused World Athletics of "targeting" African women once they start doing well globally. "African sport can contribute towards hearing the voices of African female athletes, in order for change to happen for future generations," she said.

## Clive's Sports Stars

Here at Creative Support we have many talented sportspeople and sports lovers who have shared their thoughts with us. We spoke to Clive (right) in Doncaster who has been with us since 2019.

"I am Black and my parents are Jamaican," said Clive. "I love sports, especially football. I used to play when I was younger as a defender." Clive said his favourite footballers are Raheem Sterling and Marcus Rashford, and when speaking about the aftermath of the Euro's final he said: "It's been great to see the fans back in the stadium as it brings energy to the game, but the downside is that it also brings racial abuse on the pitch towards the players. When players take the knee before a game, they can get a lot of abuse, especially when it's an international game."

"It's great to see that more and more black athletes are rising to the top of their profession," continued Clive. "It gives the young black generation hope to achieve their goals in competing in sports."



**Clive in Doncaster tells us about his sporting heroes**



# Proud to be

**Black Lives Matter/Stand Up To Racism protest rally in London 2016.**

**This year, the official Black History Month theme is 'Proud to Be': a celebration of everything that people are and what makes them proud.**

As part of celebrating this theme, we'd like to talk about being proud to be Black and LGBTQ+. The crossover of these barriers is better known as 'intersectionality', and refers to the overlap of different social identities such as race, gender, or sexual orientation, resulting in discrimination. Blogger 'Another Angry Woman' wrote that being a person with an intersectional identity is like standing in the middle of the road and being hit by cars from all different sides. Roshan das Nair, a professor of Clinical Psychology, compares it to being at a birthday party with different circles of friends who rarely hang out. Having an intersectional identity can cause additional distress, and potentially lead to feelings of isolation.

According to Stonewall, 80% of Black men have experienced racism in Britain's gay scene. Black LGBTQ+ people can experience racism from within the LGBTQ+ community, and homophobia within the Black community. It can make someone feel like that they do not completely belong in one group or another.

Roberto Valdes, an American attorney, wrote about his experience as a queer man of colour. "I've found myself placing my queerness in one box, and my Blackness in another," he writes. "As a society, we must do a better job of creating spaces for people to be fully expressive in who they are." Audre Lorde, an American writer and self-described Black lesbian,

mother and feminist sums it up by saying "There is no such thing as a single – issue struggle, because we do not live single – issue lives."

Marsha P Johnson was an activist and pioneer who fought for the equality for the transgender, Black, LGBTQ+ communities and homeless people. In June 1969, police raided a gay bar in New York called The Stonewall Inn, using excessive violence against the people inside. Marsha, 23 at the time, resisted arrest and following the raid led a series of protests and riots demanding gay rights and equality for all. A month after these protests, the first openly gay march took place in New York, now known as the first Pride march and a huge milestone for the community.

If some parts of our identity do not belong to oppressed groups, for example being white or heterosexual, then we have 'privilege' in these areas. David Gaider, a Canadian writer, says "Privilege is when you think that something is not a problem, because it's not a problem for you personally." We can use this privilege to challenge the current system and raise the voices of those who do not hold the same power.

**Being aware of what intersectionality is and how it affects people is really important. By increasing our awareness it furthers our understanding as allies so we can better support the people impacted by different types of discrimination. Everyone should have the right to be proud of who they are without fear or discrimination.**



# Black Lives Matter – Reflecting on 2021



Marcus Rashford mural in Withington, Manchester after it was vandalised in July 2021.

Since the height of the Black Lives Matter protests and media attention in May 2020, you might wonder what has changed. Whilst hopeful this time it would be different, many predicted that even after the heartfelt displays of outrage and commitments to change from white communities, after a few months we'd be back to normal – ignoring racism. Although the attention has lessened, the conversation has changed for good. People are talking and thinking about race and racism in a way that we can't go back from, awareness is growing and expectations for real inclusion are changing.

Last year Creative Support launched the Black Lives Matter Manifesto for Action, which set out our commitment to tackling racial injustice and becoming an Anti-Racist organisation. We knew that real and meaningful change couldn't be achieved overnight, that our goals needed to be long term, and that our work had to be consistent – not dwindling after the media hype ended.

Although we are keen to see change happen, our main focus over the past 12 months has been on self-interrogation, asking ourselves hard questions about the cultures and biases we perpetuate, digging into the areas where we

could do better, and really understanding the experiences of Black & minority ethnic colleagues and service users. We set up our Black Lives Matter Staff Sessions (running seven meetings across the year), as well as organisation – wide questionnaires, as opportunities to talk about race & racism, listen to the experiences of Black colleagues, identify issues and reflect on how we could work together to make a positive change. This has made sure that the voices and experiences of Black and minority ethnic staff are directing the actions we take and how we prioritise areas of the manifesto. Areas we have progressed over the last 12 months have included:

- Adopting the Halo Code
- Updating our marketing plans & guidelines to ensure positive representation and inclusion
- Creating two dedicated publications (in October and March) to celebrate Black & minority ethnic identities, culture & heritage
- Improving our data recording so that we can create meaningful Race Pay Gap reporting
- Updating our Equality, Diversity & Human Rights Training to include a core section on

anti-racism and our Manifesto Commitments

- Developing new Anti-Racism training for all staff (book your place now!), and enhanced training for Managers
- Active steps in recruitment, including placing adverts on Black & minority ethnic job boards
- Supporting and funding places for Black staff on the 'Moving Up' leadership programme.

Fatima, a Team Leader in Greater Manchester, has successfully applied for the course and said: "I am so excited for the course to start! I have been with Creative Support for almost three years, and in between roles I had to go back to The Gambia. I have lived in the UK for over 40 years and started at Creative Support through an agency while I completed

my undergraduate degree and Masters. I spoke to my Director about the course before applying, who encouraged me to go for it. This is one of the first opportunities I've had as a manager to do leadership training like this."

**"The reason I'm doing this is because I feel I have a lot to give and a lot of management skills, and would like to use this course as a stepping stone to continue moving up," said Fatima.**

**"I always want to advance myself, and my manager Sally knows of my drive and ambition and told me about this leadership course. I think the opportunity to do courses like this are brilliant. There's a big gap for Asian and African people who haven't had the opportunity, so it's great that this is available now."**



## 'A moment in history' Tara, Service Manager at Makonnen House

Tara at Makonnen House explains the importance of Black Lives Matter (BLM) to him, and to others, and in particular this year's Black History Month during the pandemic:

"The last year has been one which has been unique for most of us. The obvious reason has been the global pandemic which we have all had to negotiate and try and adapt to. However, alongside this, the world has seen a huge increase in awareness of a global movement generally known as Black Lives Matter.

"Whilst the pandemic is being tackled with vaccines and herd immunity and the worst of it probably behind us, the longstanding issues being highlighted by BLM remain and will still be with us for a long time to come. Whilst for many Black people, issues around racism and discrimination have improved over the last few decades, there are many examples which demonstrate the improvements still needed. Only by talking about these issues can change occur.

"Black History Month is a time when recent events can be reflected upon and discussed further, purely because the last 18 months will be seen as a pivotal time in Black history. It is also a time when everybody can celebrate the impact of Black culture and Black individuals in the past

and present, and the contributions that they have made and continue to make in our multicultural society.

"At Makonnen House, we will be having different days during October where staff and people we support can come together to share our thoughts about Black history, cook some authentic African and Caribbean meals, and listen to good music together."



Tara explains the importance of Black Live Matter



# Black Excellence in Healthcare

There are countless examples of Black and minority ethnic health and social care professionals who, throughout history, have paved the way for new innovations, medical devices, and high-quality patient care. We have put together this article to celebrate some of these incredible people from recent years who have helped to make our healthcare system what it is today.

To highlight and share Black excellence, here are some of the incredible Black men and women who have been instrumental in the fight against COVID-19.



**Misaki Wayengera (left)**, a Ugandan physician, academician and medical researcher, helped to invent a rapid coronavirus antibody test. By drawing blood from the finger, the test is fast and affordable and does not need a power source or a laboratory to use. Working with the team at Uganda's oldest public university, they

were able to use previous knowledge from their development of a rapid test for Ebola. "We've had a history of developing rapid tests for infectious diseases," says Misaki, "so, when COVID came we were like 'OK, we have the skills, why don't we do this?'". Misaki is listed as number 57 out of 100 most influential Africans in the 2015 New African Magazine.

**Yvonne Coghill (top right)** is one of the NHS' most senior nurses, who actively promotes race equality within the health service. "Women in the 21st century are told they can do and be anything, yet we know that for some women it is truer than for others. We need women to speak up for their black and minority ethnic sisters, because across the board BME people earn less than their white counterparts; this is the race equality pay

gap." On COVID-19, Yvonne said "Many people on the front line are from BME backgrounds: doctors, nurses, bus drivers, cleaners, shop assistants. These people are in essential jobs and play key roles in keeping the country going. We should value, respect and

appreciate the contributions of these people in both the good times, as well as the bad."

And it's not just an individual who can make a difference, sometimes it can be a whole family, as displayed by Elizabeth Anionwu below.

**Elizabeth Anionwu (below)** is a British nurse, healthcare administrator, lecturer, and retired professor of Nursing at the University of West London. "People from diverse cultures are not always valued, and are still sometimes just seen as problems" she said. Elizabeth was Britain's first, and only, sickle cell and thalassemia nurse specialist for six years. She has received numerous awards, including the Pride of Britain lifetime achievement award and a



Damehood for services to nursing. When talking about COVID, Elizabeth said "If you take black and minority workers off the frontline, then you don't have an NHS. It's all well and good saying clap for carers, but it's time to pay them. Money was found for equipment and increases to hospital capacity, but why can't they borrow for nurses and midwives?"



**Pictured left to right: Elaine Unegbu, Elizabeth Anionwu, Ngozi Edi-Osagie, Ndididi Edi-Osagie**

Elizabeth's cousin, **Elaine Unegbu (above)**, was born in the Dutch Caribbean island of Aruba. In the 1960s she worked at the Manchester Royal Infirmary, and then at the Northern Hospital as the first Black staff nurse and ward sister. She now volunteers at the Macmillan Centre at the MRI and the Health Authority, and is a part of several health and social care committees in Greater Manchester. "You have to be caring, you have to be compassionate and you have to have confidence and be committed. As a patient you are vulnerable, and you need someone who is confident to look after you."

Elaine's daughter, **Ngozi Edi-Osagie (above)**, qualified in medicine in Nigeria before returning to Manchester and London for postgraduate training in paediatrics. She is the clinical lead for the creation of a single hospital service across Manchester, aiming to merge three NHS trusts and bring together 10 hospitals and community services. Her daughter **Ndididi Edi-Osagie (above)** is a doctor at Stepping Hill hospital in Stockport.

Despite Black excellence being cemented into our healthcare system, it is important to recognise that there is still unequal treatment towards professionals and patients in this sector. Black and minority ethnic people make up a huge part of our NHS, with around 40% of doctors coming from black or ethnic minority backgrounds, and 38% of these doctors trained overseas. Last year, the NHS Race and Health Observatory was set up in response to findings that COVID-19 disproportionately affected Black, Asian, and

minority ethnic people. The Office for National Statistics found that Black people were four times more likely to die from COVID-19 related death than white people.

The Race and Health Observatory aim to explore links between race and health. They have found evidence of racism in our healthcare organisations, leading to unequal treatment and a lack of care and support. For example, they found that doctors who are from ethnic minority backgrounds were twice as likely to be reported to their employers than white doctors, and on top of that, are more likely to be investigated and will face harsher

penalties. A BMA survey from 2019 found that only 55% of doctors from ethnic minority backgrounds felt included in the workplace, compared to 75% of white doctors.

**"Many people on the front line are from BME backgrounds: doctors, nurses, bus drivers, cleaners, shop assistants. These people are in essential jobs and play key roles in keeping the country going"**

— Yvonne Coghill

**Although the people we have highlighted are only a small representation of the overwhelming amount of Black excellence in our NHS, it is important to appreciate how much these individuals have helped to grow and solidify our healthcare system to benefit us all. We have to make the effort to overcome the racial inequality that exists currently, and understand that despite such a large portion of our NHS staff identifying as Black, Asian, or minority ethnic, they are still more likely to face issues in healthcare than white people. By acknowledging and truly valuing the innovation, hard work and determination that Black healthcare professionals share with us, we can help to alter perceptions in the health and social care industry and make it a better, more equal place for everyone.**





# What is in a Name?

*Orange is the New Black* star Uzo Aduba at the 67th Primetime Emmy Awards

**People's names are a part of who they are. They are a person's identity, given to them by their family or chosen by themselves, and are the first things we define or introduce ourselves as.**

Using people's names correctly is really important. Names almost always have a story behind why they were chosen, and are as much a part of the person as their personality or the clothes they wear. They can also be a mark of someone's culture, and by taking the time to learn how to properly pronounce and spell their name, it shows that you respect them and their heritage.

In recent years, there have been many Black public figures who have reclaimed their birth names, which were originally changed for reasons such as concerns over pronunciation. Actor Thandiwe Newton, who formerly went by Thandie Newton, reclaimed the correct spelling of her name and stated "I'm taking back what's mine." She was credited as Thandie Newton for over 30 years of her career due to an initial misspelling from her first acting credit. Thandiwe, which means 'beloved' in Zulu, is a reflection of her cultural heritage and an acknowledgement of her family history.

If you find someone's name difficult to pronounce, you might offer to call them by a nickname instead. This could be taken to mean that you don't want to take the time to learn how to say it. Uzo Aduba (above), an actor from TV show 'Orange is the New Black', spoke about this in an interview with The Improper Bostonian, where she explained why she stuck to her guns and used her real name (albeit a shortened version) for her acting credits: "In grade school, because my last name started with an A, I was the first in roll call, and nobody ever knew how to pronounce it. So I went home and asked my mother if I could be called Zoe. I remember she was cooking, and in her Nigerian accent she said "Why?" I said, "Nobody can pronounce it." Without missing a beat, she said, "If they can learn to say Tchaikovsky and Michaelangelo and Dostoyevsky, they can learn to say Uzoamaka."

By offering people 'easier' or white-sounding names, it tries to make Black people 'fit' into a Western box and removes the reference to their culture, heritage, and family. If you have difficulty saying someone's name, the easiest solution is to ask them the correct way to pronounce it and then take the time to practice. By typing it into Google, you can listen to the name being sounded out and

also see the phonetic pronunciation, as well as the meaning behind the name.

Xian Zhao, a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Toronto, focuses her research on ethnicity and name pronunciation. In an article for the BBC, she said that although many people don't realise it, pronouncing an unfamiliar name incorrectly is a form of implied discrimination. "It sends a message that you are minimal" said Zhao. "You are not important in this environment, so why should I take time and my effort to learn it?"

In a Guardian article, Love Island contestant Yewande Biala explained how it feels to have her name mispronounced, and the mental toll it can have. "When someone doesn't take the time to learn the proper way to pronounce another

person's name, or worse- intentionally mocks it for being 'too difficult' to pronounce [...] it can come across as malicious." said Yewande. "These incidents may appear banal and trivial, but they can have a great impact on individual emotional state. So, when you address me, say my name 'Yewande' - and yes, it is important."

***Making sure to pronounce people's names correctly goes a much longer way than you might expect. It is a mark of respect, both of the person but also of their heritage and family. It's really important to take the time to learn how to properly pronounce and spell people's names and is another way everyone can show their support and appreciation of each other, and the incredible diversity across the country.***



**Abiola, Support Worker, Manchester.**

"My full name is Abiola, which literally translates as 'Born Wealth', but actually means 'we have given birth to wealth'. It can also be translated as Honour and Riches. Traditional African names often have unique stories behind them and link to the day or time a baby is born or the circumstances surrounding the birth. Several factors influence the names parents choose for their children.

"The story behind my name as told to me by my wonderful parents is that just before I was born, my father was in between jobs. I am the third of seven children, and when I was conceived, my father had just got a really good job as the Personnel Manager / Head of Human Resources at Nigeria Airways. My mother was a qualified teacher and she was promoted at the time too. By the time I was born, things had turned around for the better. My parents moved to a bigger house and prospered on all sides, hence the reason I was befittingly named Abiola.

"I have always been called 'Abi' because all my names begin with the letters 'Ab'. My middle name is Abigail which is of Hebrew origin, and it means 'Father's Joy'. My other name is Abosede which literally translates as 'she came at the beginning of the week' and simply denotes the fact that I was born on a Sunday!

Most African names have stories behind them!"



**Kizzy, Office and Customer Manager, Head Office.**

"Kizzy is an African name which I'm really proud of, and it comes from the TV show 'Roots'. Kizzy means life in African although the meaning changes between people! My heritage is Jamaican but I have an African name that is rooted in slavery which means a lot to me.

"To me, my name means confidence. When I think about my name, it makes me proud to be Black and it's shaped me into the person I am today. I have a lot of positivity about my name. My parents chose Kizzy to mark my heritage and to stand out and be different and unique. When I was born they had a list of names including Olivia, but they took a few weeks to name me and they landed on Kizzy.

"I've experienced negativity around my name so many times. Daily people spell it wrong, but it has happened more in my adult life as adults are a bit more blasé about getting it right. I've had Kitty, Kissy, despite it being in my email address and signature! When people ask how do you say Kizzy, or how do you spell that, it doesn't upset me or frustrate me, I just correct them as it's something I'm really proud of; a name is an important aspect of who you are."



# Inspirational Quotes

Our members of staff and the people we support at Makonnen House have shared some quotes from inspirational Black figures throughout history, and what these quotes mean to them.



## Fabian, tenant

“Where there is no vision, there is no hope” – *George Washington Carver (below)*.



“There’s still racial inequality. We did get justice for George Floyd, but it’s not enough because it still happens across the world.

I believe we should have equality, diversity and world peace. I want equality because we’re all the same, we’ve all got the same blood. We need to let diversity be known, and let the young people of today learn about their culture, and where they’re from and their heritage.

It means a lot to me to be connected to my Jamaican heritage and I’d like to know more about it. I attended a meeting in Stockport about Black History Month, which was very educational. The speaker there talked about where he comes from, and how he felt coming over at such a young age. I’d like to keep going to these meetings to learn more.”

I wish to have world peace and that we can all just get on together.”

## John, Senior Support Worker

“The media’s the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that’s the power. Because they control the minds of the masses. The press is so powerful in its image-making role, it can make the criminal look like they’re the victim and make the victim look like they’re the criminal. If you aren’t careful the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed and loving the people who are doing the oppressing” – *Malcolm X (below)*.



“This statement is pertinent to the present day with examples of the killing of George Floyd and

how it was portrayed. Also the two sisters Nicole Smallman and Bibba Henry that were murdered in a London park had different, and in some cases less, media coverage than Sarah Everard who was also killed last year.”

## Moses, Support Worker

“No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.” – *Martin Luther King (below)*.

“I grew up in South Africa in Apartheid with the racist ideology. I was arrested when I was 11 years old for eating and drinking inside a shop. My dad was arrested trying to help me. They said: ‘this is not for your type of people.’

The Martin Luther King quote means a lot to me. People are taught to hate. They can also be taught to love. We are one people; we have different skin, but humans are humans.

I came to the UK 25 years ago. It is diverse here and one of the best countries to be in – I would say the best in Europe for accepting diversity. You don’t feel [racism] here. If someone says something to you, you are free to walk away, or to say something back. In South Africa, segregation was law – you could not sit on the same bus as a white person or be in the same restaurant. There were even different churches for Black and white people. God is not Black or white, he is just one – we should be able to worship together.

Black Lives Matter (BLM) is just an awareness. People are now aware that we need to live together. This is our planet, we are all the inhabitants of it; we need to learn to accept one

another. I may be in hospital and need a blood transfusion, they don’t say you can’t have white blood or black blood, and even body parts; they are the same. Blood is blood and shows we are all human beings that belong to the human race, and so the awareness had a very big impact. People are learning. People are starting to appreciate one another.

Most of my kid’s friends are white, and when I start to talk about division, they say “No, dad, I don’t want to talk about that.” I am just trying to tell them about the history and what it used to be like, but they don’t see it. Kids don’t see skin, they see the human being. It’s a very big difference. Nowadays, the kids have accepted it – they don’t see [race] at all, they only see a human.

I’m always conscious of who I am, I’m always looking for signs of acceptance as it’s easy to go back to what I went through. Some of my friends in South Africa, their outlooks have not changed at all. I think, “Why should I have to go through this situation?” We have to move on in life.”





# Incredible Inventors

The team at Kwanzaa House have put together an incredible article with fascinating facts about Black inventors throughout history. Black inventors have given us so many ground-breaking and important inventions over the centuries, and it's important to recognise and appreciate their contributions to society.

We hope you'll learn lots of interesting things throughout the article, we definitely did! For example, did you know that the gas mask and traffic lights were invented by the same person? And do you know where the phrase 'the real McCoy' comes from? The 'real' real McCoy!

From shoes, to central heating, to cataract surgery, these awe-inspiring individuals have transformed our everyday lives and also saved many lives throughout history, so read on to find out more.

## Alice H. Parker



In 1919, African-American inventor Alice Parker was issued a patent for improving the heating furnace to give us central heating. At the time people relied on burning coal or wood, so Alice designed the first furnace to carry heat through different rooms using an on-off switch.

## Elijah McCoy

Elijah McCoy's first patent was in 1872 for a lubricator for steam engines. During his life, McCoy invented and sold 57 different kinds of devices and machine parts, including an ironing board and a lawn sprinkler. He is perhaps best known for inventing the automatic oil cup.

Other inventors tried to copy McCoy's oil-dripping cup, none of which worked as well. Customers started asking for 'the real McCoy', which is where the expression comes from!



## Lewis Latimer



Born in 1848, Lewis Latimer was a Black American inventor known for inventing an evaporative air conditioner, a toilet system for railroad cars, and the carbon filament in the light bulb. He also worked with Alexander Graham Bell to draft the patent for his design of the telephone, and with Thomas Edison on his work in incandescent lighting.

## Jan Ernst Matzeliger



In 1883, Dutch inventor Jan Ernst Matzeliger patented the shoe lasting machine, tacking together the sole and the upper shoe. By hand, one person could make 50 pairs of shoes in a day. Jan's machine could make between 150 and 700 pairs a day, increasing shoemaking speed by 900%, and helped to cut shoe prices across the nation in half!

## Granville T. Woods



African American inventor Granville T. Woods was nicknamed the 'Black Edison', filing over 60 patents in his lifetime. The first was in 1889 for an improved steam boiler furnace. His patent for an improved telephone transmitter, combining the telephone and the telegraph, was later bought by Alexander Graham Bell. One of his most important inventions was a metal wheel allowing trolleys to collect electric power from wires. He also invented the induction telegraph, which speed up voice communication to prevent errors such as train accidents.

## George Washington Carver



George Washington Carver was one of the most prominent black scientists of the early 20th century. In 1894 he became the first African American to earn a Bachelor of Science degree. Nicknamed 'The Peanut Man', he developed more than 300 food, industrial and commercial products from peanuts, including milk, Worcestershire sauce, cooking oils, paper, soaps and wood stains.

## Madam C.J. Walker



Madame C.J. Walker invented a line of African American hair growing products in 1905. She opened a factory and beauty school in Pittsburgh, and is recorded as the first female self-made millionaire in America. By the time of her death in 1919 she was considered the wealthiest self-made black woman in America.

## Garrett Morgan



Garrett Morgan was an African American inventor and businessman, most known for inventing an improved sewing machine, traffic signal, hair straightening product, and a gas mask used as the blueprint for those used in WWI.

## Dr. Patricia E. Bath



Dr. Patricia E. Bath was the first African American to complete a residency in ophthalmology (diagnosis and treatment of eye disorders) and the first African American female doctor to receive a medical patent. She invented device to create a less painful and more precise treatment of cataracts, to help restore the sight of people who had been blind for more than 30 years.

## Sarah E. Goode



Sarah E. Goode was the second known African American woman to receive a U.S patent for her invention of a folding cabinet bed in 1885, which revolutionised many sleepovers!

## Benjamin Banneker



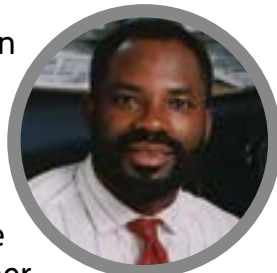
Benjamin Banneker ran his own farm in the 1700s in Maryland. He made an irrigation system for the farm, and is credited with making the first clock in America that kept time for more than 50 years. He also taught himself astronomy and could forecast lunar and solar eclipses.

## Frederick McKinley Jones



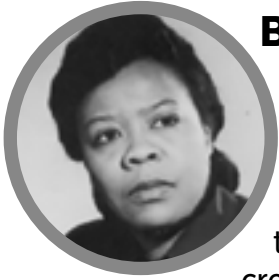
In the 1930s, Frederick designed and patented a portable air-cooling unit for trucks carrying perishable food. These refrigeration units helped the United States military carry food and blood during WWII. Over the course of his career he received more than 60 patents for refrigeration technologies, X-ray machines, engines and sound equipment.

## Philip Emeagwali



Philip Emeagwali is a Nigerian computer scientist who won the 1989 Gordon Bell Prize for developing the fastest supercomputer software. Today, his computers are used to forecast the weather and predict the likelihood and effects of future global warming.





## Bessie Blount

After WWII, thousands of American soldiers were in need of physical therapy. She helped arm amputees to use their feet, and also created a food tube with an electric motor that would feed the patients food once they bit down. It allowed her patients to eat independently and comfortably.

Thank you very much to the team at Kwanzaa House for putting together such an informative article celebrating the incredible devices and contributions from Black inventors. We learned lots reading this, and hope you did too.

*On a personal note, we would like to add our thanks to one of the greatest inventors of all time, Mr George Crum, who created the first crisps, or potato chips as they're fondly known as in the states. Apparently they were born from a customer complaint about thick fries, so Mr Crum made the thinnest slices of potato possible and fried them, introducing the world to (in our opinion) the greatest savoury snack of all time.*

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who reached out to get involved in creating this newsletter and contributing to our Black History Month celebrations—we couldn't have done it without you.

If you would like to get involved in any of our future celebrations, get in touch with the Marketing Department on the email below and be sure to check out our Twitter and Facebook pages!



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