

SLAM

November 2023



About SLAM

Hello students, teachers, and parents, and thank you for reading the first edition of the SLAM newsletter of 2023. SLAM is a team that is committed to the cause of celebrating and expanding diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in the OIS community. SLAM stands for:

Student
Led
Anti-racist
Movement

In this issue, we'll be covering what special month November is, its special days, and sharing some tips on being inclusive.

What Special Month is it?

It's National American Indian and Alaskan Native Heritage Month! Turn to page 3 to learn more.

Special Days this Month:

Some special days this month include:

- All Saints' Day (Pg. 4)
- Dia de los Muertos (Pg. 5)
- Diwali (Pg. 6)
- Thanksgiving (Pg. 8)

What are Microaggressions?

Learn more about what microaggressions are and why they're hurtful on page 9.

National American Indian and Alaskan Native Heritage Month

It's National American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN) Heritage Month! According to the article, American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month Fun Facts, in 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed a joint congressional resolution designating November as AIAN Heritage Month. However, it was just called National American Indian Heritage Month. Over the years, this changed to National American Indian and Alaskan Native Heritage month.

All Saints' Day

All Saints' Day is a Christian holiday celebrating all the saints of the church, both known and unknown, who have attained heaven. It is celebrated on November 1st in Western churches. The origins of All Saints' Day can't be traced with certainty, as it has been observed on many days in many different places. It is also known as All Hallows, and its eve is known as Halloween.

Dia De Los Muertos

Dia De Los Muertos, also known as Day of the Dead, is a two day holiday. Families create *ofrendas* to honor departed family members. These altars usually have photos of the deceased, their favorite food, and are decorated with bright yellow marigolds. These offerings are believed to encourage visits from the land of the dead. As the article *Day of the Dead (Dia De Los Muertos)* says, "Day of the Dead is a holiday to remember loved ones by sharing a meal with them as one would when they were alive."

Diwali

According to National Geographic, Diwali, or Dipawali, is India's biggest and most important holiday of the year. This festival of lights is very important for Hindus, but over the years, Diwali has become a national festival that's also enjoyed by non-Hindu communities. Diwali is celebrated over five days. The chart from National Geographic on the next page shows this.

Day One:	People clean their homes and shop for gold or kitchen utensils to help bring good fortune.
Day Two:	People decorate their homes with clay lamps and create design patterns called rangoli on the floor using colored powders or sand.
Day Three:	On the main day of the festival, families gather together for Lakshmi puja, a prayer to Goddess Lakshmi, followed by mouth-watering feasts and firework festivities.
Day Four:	This is the first day of the new year, when friends and relatives visit with gifts and best wishes for the season.
Day Five:	Brothers visit their married sisters, who welcome them with love and a lavish meal.

Thanksgiving

The first Thanksgiving was in November, 1621, after the Pilgrims' successful corn harvest. The first Thanksgiving was celebrated over three days! Funnily enough, turkey wasn't served, but venison was. One fun Thanksgiving fact is that this year, more than 54 million Americans are expected to travel during the Thanksgiving holiday. This is 4.8% up from last year!

What are Microaggressions?

You might have heard of the term, “Microaggression”. For those who haven’t, a microaggression is a statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of subtle or unintentional discrimination against a person or group. This sounds very complicated, so let's put it in simpler terms. A microaggression is when a person makes a remark or action that is hurtful towards another person because they're part of a group that is discriminated against. These microaggressions are often unintentional, and happen very frequently. They can even appear in

what are supposed to be compliments. One example of a microaggression is actually very common. Someone might tell a person that has a different ethnicity than them, “Where are you from?” These phrases can come from a person being curious, but can have damaging effects. This often translates into: You don’t seem to belong here.

Rakshitha Arni Ravishankar wrote an article about this, and reached out to her colleagues to see how they felt. Her colleagues and her brought up a very good point. It depends who’s asking the question, and how. If a random student goes up and asks, out of the blue, “Where are you from?” it can be damaging. A friend asking would usually be okay, but someone you barely know, or just met? Probably not. However,

if the person brings it up, it can start a conversation. Just be careful, as it can easily make people feel uncomfortable or like outsiders.

Upcoming Events

Thank you for reading November's newsletter. Make sure to read December's paper, and pay attention to KOIS for Movie Fridays. On Movie Fridays, we play fun films that promote diversity. Everyone's welcome to come! Have a wonderful day!