

A TIME FOR REFLECTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

When the calendar turns to November, it's officially the beginning of the holiday season. Conversation and introspection during this shared time can pique interest in learning more about one another and fostering empathy. This realization can motivate individuals to recognize and take steps to protect the rights of historically oppressed and marginalized groups. Native Americans, the original inhabitants of the United States, are one such group.

"This time of year is an opportunity to spread awareness about issues faced by Native Americans and the "back-story" to what really happened to establish a colony." - Paula Peters, a Mashpee Wampanoag woman.

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

November is Native American Heritage Month. Last week, many people celebrated Thanksgiving, sharing a bountiful meal with friends and family. However, many Native American tribes across the nation observed Thanksgiving as a day of reflection and mourning. Indigenous tribes honored the autumn harvest and the bounty of Mother Earth long before colonists made their way here. Historically and currently, their spirituality placed a strong emphasis on appreciation for creation, protection of the environment, and acknowledgment of the need for human connection and connection to nature. Together, we can respect and recognize the customs and principles that Indigenous peoples have instilled, providing us an opportunity to be grateful for the riches of the land, our families, and our communities.

As we draw to a close of November, consider becoming more educated about Native American culture, increasing your knowledge of the unique challenges faced by Native Americans, and gaining understanding about how historical trauma has impacted our Indigenous peoples. Consider celebrating and raising awareness of the culture, history, and contributions of our Indigenous peoples, as well as honoring the Native American tribes of North America for their beauty, strength, and resiliency.