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December 2 – National Build Joy Day

[National Build Joy Day](#) is a day to remember the power of spreading joy, kindness, and happiness to others within the community. Practice by donating your time or money to a non-profit, creating care packages for people living in nursing homes, or just writing uplifting notes and leave them in random places for people to find.

December 21 – Winter Solstice

[Winter Solstice](#) marks the day that the sun is at the farthest point away from the Northern Hemisphere and the closest point to the Southern Hemisphere. For the northern hemisphere, this means it is the shortest day and the longest night of the year. The solstice has been celebrated by many cultures throughout all of history.

December 25 – Christmas

[Christmas](#) is both a Christian holiday celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ and a non-Christian holiday celebrating the arrival of Santa Claus and his bag of toys. Decorations can be elaborate and often include trees inside the house that have been decorated with lights and other ornaments. Gifts are widely exchanged, and the day is celebrated with prayer (for Christians), singing, games, and the gathering of friends and family for a large feast.

December 25 – Hanukkah

[Hanukkah](#), also known as the Festival of Lights, is a Jewish holiday celebrating the rebuilding of the Second Temple of Jerusalem. It is celebrated over eight days, in which each day is marked by the lighting of a candle on a menorah. This joyous holiday is celebrated with prayer, festive meals, songs, games, and exchanging gifts.

December 26 – Kwanzaa

[Kwanzaa](#) is an annual celebration of African American culture. It is held from December 26 through January 1. The seven principles of Kwanzaa (Nguzo Saba) are unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. The holiday is celebrated with a candle-lighting ritual, music, performances, and a gathering of friends and family for a feast.



Both Hanukkah (above) and Kwanzaa (below) are celebrated with the lighting of candles



Images (top): RDNE/Pexels, (bottom): Cultura Creative/Adobe Stock

Universal Human Rights Month



Ethiopia

As we hear about atrocities that are happening around the world, a common response is often to shake our heads and say, “Oh, that’s too bad.” You may feel sickened and angry, but far too quickly, our minds turn back to our own daily concerns. Who’s going to take the kids to soccer, and what are we having for supper?



Burundi

We all do this because our own lives and families naturally come first. But what if it was you in one of these situations? What if it was your child, your parent, or your sibling living without basic human rights? What if...

- Your wife, mother, daughter, and most of the women in town have been raped and tortured. On the way out of town, the men who did this took every scrap of food.
- You wrote on social media that you don’t like the president. The next day, you are taken away. Your family doesn’t know whether you are alive or dead. After eight years in prison, you have still not been charged with a crime.
- When the invading troops came to your house, they raped and shot your wife, violently kidnapped your children, and took you to a prison camp that offered only starvation and torture.
- Your daughter just turned 13 years old and is legally not allowed to attend school anymore. Instead, her marriage has been arranged (to a man who is 69 years old) and will take place next month. She will be just 14 years old when her first child is born.



Ukraine

Treasure your freedom, your loved ones, and your security. Be grateful for all you’ve been given, but don’t forget those who have not been as fortunate as you. Feelings of guilt lead only to avoidance. Instead, this is a time for action. Write or call your elected officials, donate your time or money to eliminating human rights violations, or participate in a protest. Have compassion for the suffering of others and speak up for those who have no voice.



Gaza



Afghanistan

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

All people are born free and equal regardless of race, color, sex, language, religion, politics, or where they were born.

Everyone has the right:

- ... to life and to live in freedom and safety.
- ... to be free from slavery.
- ... to be free from torture.
- ... to be equal and recognized before the law.
- ... to seek justice if their rights are violated.
- ... to freedom from unfair arrest, detention, or exile.
- ... to a fair trial.
- ... to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.
- ... to privacy and freedom from attacks on their reputation.
- ... to freedom of movement and residence.
- ... to seek asylum from persecution.
- ... to a nationality.
- ... to marry and to have a family.
- ... to own property.
- ... to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.
- ... to freedom of opinion and expression.
- ... to freedom of peaceful assembly.
- ... to take part in government and to have equal access to public service.
- ... to social security.
- ... to work, to equal pay, to protection against unemployment, and the right to form and join trade unions.
- ... to rest and leisure.
- ... to a decent standard of living, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care.
- ... to education.
- ... to participate in and enjoy culture, art, and science.
- ... to a social and international order where the rights in this Declaration can be fully realized.

We have a duty to other people, and we should protect each other’s rights and freedoms. Nobody can take away these rights and freedoms.

<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

Photo Credits (top down): Achilli Family/Flickr, EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid/ Flickr, RafahKid Kid/Flickr, Afghanistan Matters/Flickr

Culture Creators

Compassion

Having compassion means empathizing with someone's pain while also feeling a need to help and then taking action. Compassion means that you don't turn away from the hurt and needs of others. You see their struggles, and you feel compelled to help. Being compassionate is what makes us human. We are social creatures, and we thrive in communities. Compassion builds relationships and improves society. When we help each other, we help to make the world a better place for everyone.

Compassion = Empathy + Action

Why is Compassion Important



- Promotes connections.
- Improves society.
- Pushes us to recognize and address inequity and the struggles of others.
- Increases problem-solving.
- Improves health and well-being.

How to have Compassion During Moments of Conflict

- Pause and take a few breaths before reacting.
- Validate your emotions and their emotions.
- Actively listen to understand the other person.
- Don't blame or accuse the other person.
- Encourage open dialogue between everyone involved.



Self-Compassion

- Show kindness and warmth towards yourself.
- Don't ignore your pain, but don't criticize or judge it either.
- Be tolerant of your shortcomings; let yourself make mistakes.
- Be aware of what you're feeling.
- Don't try to suppress or deny your emotions.



- Understand that you are not alone in your imperfection.
- Observe your negative thoughts with curiosity and without judgment.
- **Everyone** feels inadequate; **everyone** is imperfect; **everyone** feels hurt; **everyone** says the wrong thing; **everyone** makes mistakes!

How to be More Compassionate

- Send a thoughtful note or offer a kind word to someone who is going through a hard time.
- Collect clothes, toiletries, toys and food for others who may be struggling.
- Nurture self-compassion.
- If you see a need, work to fix it.
- Small acts of compassion can make a big difference in your life and in the lives of those you help.



<https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/compassion>, Image: upklyak/Freepik

News & Updates

Christmas in Dubuque & the Tri-States

[Reflections in the Park](#)

December 1 – January 1 @ 5 – 10 PM (Murphy Park)

[Christmas at Heritage Center](#)

December 6 – 7:30 PM (Heritage Center)

[Santa's Workshop and Tree Lighting](#)

December 7 @ 1 PM (Carnegie-Stout Public Library)

[Dubuque Symphony Orchestra Holiday Concerts](#)

December 7 @ 7:30 PM, December 8 @ 2 PM
(Five Flags Theater)

[Ring of Kerry – Celtic Holiday Concert](#)

December 8 @ 2:00 PM (Turner Hall, Galena, IL)

[World Ballet Company: The Nutcracker](#)

December 10 @ 7 PM (Five Flags Theater)

[Home for the Holidays at Mathias Ham Historic Site](#)

December 14 @ 11 AM – 4 PM

Afternoon Tea: December 15 @ 1 – 3 PM

[The Nutcracker](#)

December 14-22, times vary, (Grand Opera House)

[Fiestas Navideñas en Familia \(Family Christmas Party\)](#)

December 14 @ 5 – 8 PM (Multicultural Family Center)
Must register in advance.



The mission of the [Toys for Tots](#) program is to ensure that every child has a present to open on Christmas Day.

[Stuff the Truck for Toys for Tots \(to donate for the cause\)](#)

December 7 @ 8 AM – 4 PM

Theisen's on Dodge St.

[Toys for Tots Toy Distribution](#)

Multicultural Family Center November 25 – December 12
(times vary – must register online)

[Toys for Tots Kids' Christmas Party](#)

December 15 @ 12 – 3 PM

Five Flags Arena

First Friday

[First Friday](#) is a free downtown monthly community arts event with open galleries, artists' studios, and live entertainment, fostering community and celebrating arts in Dubuque. This month, events are held on December 6.

Henry Matthiessen III and Allen Eberle

Stoned Art Studio & Gallery @ Noon – 7 PM

Lizbeth Doran

Outside the Lines Art Gallery @ 4:30 – 7:30 PM

Dubuque Area Arts Collective & Scenic Art Loop

Smokestack @ 7 – 11 PM

Art of Love and the Debut of WynkWink

The Stu @ 5:30 – 8 PM

Kinship

Planted @ 6 – 8 PM

Tim Olson & Lena Happ Olsen

Voices Studios @ 5:30 – 9:30 PM



Carnegie-Stout Public Library

Virtual Author Talks

Each month, a selection of authors discuss their books and expert topics. These events are virtual and live; however, recordings of the talks will be archived for later viewing. Registration on the library website is required.

December 4 @ 1 PM

**Unearthed: Exploring the Smithsonian
National Gem Collection with Dr. Jeffrey Post**



December 11 @ 1 – 2 PM

**On Pulse-Pounding, Family-Driven
Mysteries: A Conversation with Laura Dave
Watch Party at Carnegie-Stout Public Library**



Volunteer Opportunity of the Month

[Urban Bicycle Food Mission Dubuque](#)

Volunteers are needed each week to prepare 150+ meals for homeless shelters and other locations around Dubuque. They also need volunteers to deliver the food in the downtown area by car or bicycle. Sign up to help at this event or any of the 200+ other opportunities at volunteerdubq.com.