This might be one of the greatest success stories of our lifetime: the first highly efficacious vaccine against COVID-19, and also a testament to the role of inclusion and open-mindedness in fueling innovation and advancement in biomedical sciences. The first messenger RNA vaccine to gain FDA approval would not have come about without the friendship and collaboration of people who traditionally would not want to work together because of the historical antagonism between their different cultures:

Dr. Ugur Sahin was born in Turkey and immigrated to Germany as a young child, where he earned a medical degree and subsequently completed a doctorate involving immunotherapy of tumor cells. Dr. Ozlem Türeci is the child of Turkish immigrants who became a doctor and then a staff member at the University of Mainz. Both met, married, and founded BioNTech in 2008, a company that has used its innovative messenger RNA technology to rapidly develop the first COVID vaccine. Reportedly, the couple worked in the lab soon after their wedding ceremony and still ride bicycles to work every day!

Dr. Albert Bourla, the Chairman and CEO of biopharmaceutical giant Pfizer, is proud of his Greek and Jewish heritage as the son of Holocaust survivors. After earning his doctorate in veterinary medicine and PhD from Aristotle University in Greece, Dr. Bourla immigrated to the United States in 2001 where he worked in various roles at Pfizer before becoming its CEO.

In 2018, BioNTech joined forces with Pfizer to first develop a better flu vaccine, then the COVID vaccine, and a meaningful friendship between these individuals flourished and was strengthened by their shared values as scientists and immigrants.

Dr. Hilal Arnouk, Downers Grove & Dr. Ari Grossman, Glendale

I am a former Division I football athlete and had the great opportunity to try out for two NFL teams. Ultimately, I stopped chasing that dream to pursue another, which is why I am here today. I’ve always wanted to be a Doctor of Physical Therapy to achieve some of my future goals, and Midwestern is giving me that opportunity. I came across Midwestern University and loved what they represented as far as the push for diversity and inclusion. I then got invited to an interview, and after speaking with the faculty and students, I knew this was the place for me. My first year has come to a close and my professors and classmates have played a huge role in my current success!

Provided by Luis Badang, MSI AZCOM
Health Disparities Surrounding COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges to individuals across the globe. From socially distancing from the ones we love, to fearing the possibility of becoming infected after a simple visit to the grocery store, the early stages of the pandemic forced many to confront their and their loved one’s health risks in a realistic, and often frightening way. Facing these facts sheds a bright light on the existence of health disparities in healthcare, or preventable differences in the occurrence of disease related to one’s racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic background.

Back in April 2021, Dr. Monica Peek, Associate Professor at the University of Chicago, provided a virtual presentation for the Midwestern community that delved into the direct associations between structural inequality and health and how these relationships were exacerbated due to the COVID-19 crisis. In addition to the actual biological changes that jeopardize health, limited opportunities and residential segregation also result from the racism and inequality embedded in our society and health systems. These limitations place minorities at a disadvantage at all times, but especially when health emergencies like a pandemic arise and resources are needed everywhere, causing some of the most underprivileged communities to receive less. The COVID-19 responses at the state and national levels have demonstrated just how critical the equal allocation of resources, including testing sites, vaccination services, and the availability of medical devices and PPE can be for ensuring that minority communities obtain the care they deserve. It has also illustrated the dramatic influence we all can have as healthcare providers in ensuring that the care we provide is equitable for all patients, while also ensuring we listen to minority communities and engage them as stakeholders in the fight to target and eradicate disparities in healthcare.

While the existence of health disparities has been perpetuated for decades, hope remains that we may be able to fight the inequities and ensure health, an entity experienced by all, is not only prioritized for some.

Greer Russel, MSI AZCOM

Neurodiversity

World Autism and Diversity Month is celebrated annually in order to create awareness and magnify individuals who have extraordinary stories and exceptional strengths. Likewise, we commemorate diversity by celebrating the exclusive cultures, perceptions, and experiences that make every individual unique. As we honor both and encourage the inclusion of every person, we recognize the remarkable contributions that call for a brighter highlight on two forms of hidden diversity in our community: neurodiversity and invisible illness.

- **Neurodiversity** describes the complete array of natural variations in the human brain around learning, thinking, or processing knowledge or information. Autism is most often referred to as an example of this, including Asperger’s, dyslexia, ADHD/ADD, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, and others.

- **Invisible illness** refers to any medical condition that influences one’s life but is not immediately noticeable to others. This includes chronic or recurrent situations such as sickle cell, diabetes, depression, arthritis, cancer, infertility, sleep disorders, Crohn’s disease, epilepsy, and more. Approximately 10% of Americans have an invisible medical condition that substantially impacts their lives - yet, with the lack of visible indications, such conditions are most often demeaned, ignored, or underestimated.

These two forms of hidden diversity share in that they are both invisible and often kept confidential for fear of stigmatization, prejudice, or discrimination. I believe we can help them be heard by embracing the uniqueness of every person in our community through recognizing, tapping into, and honoring their hidden talents with acceptance, encouragement, empowerment, stretching our faith out towards one another, and showing kindness in every way possible.

Being mindful of the hidden diversities in every individual and responding to their needs with the right attitude can make a difference in their lives leading us all into lives as ambassadors of hope, love, and peace.

Agnes Pascual, MS Glendale
### Holidays Around the World

**Songkran**

**Diwali**

**Ramadan**

**Holi**

**Chinese New Year**

**Kwanzaa**

**Chanukah**

**Ash Wednesday**

**Parinirvana**

**Loser**

**Hannami**

**Nowruz**

**Carnival**

**Sechselausen**
The importance and beauty of clothing is shared across all people: regardless of culture, birthplace, or creed. However, this fact can be easily missed as we go about our everyday lives in casual street clothes. The SNMA Fashion Show at Midwestern University Glendale campus was a wonderful opportunity for students to share pieces that represent parts of their identity while also inspiring further understanding of our fellow classmates. The striking patterns and powerful colors showcased during this event truly left a deep impression on myself and surely many others. I hope that events like this fashion show, which provide such powerful imagery of the diversity on campus, will continue to be held to foster further cultural appreciation between students and faculty alike.

*Special thanks to Kendel Ridgeway MSIII AZCOM for the photos!*

Tori Shock, MSI CCOM

The skirt I am wearing is called African print Kente cloth and the fabric is wax cotton. To me, this skirt represents a piece of my cultural heritage.

The colors that are weaved into their cloth represent different things and mean a lot: Gold represents status and serenity. Yellow represents fertility (like the ripeness of an egg yolk or fruit) and vitality. Green signifies the renewal and growth seen in plants and represents the cycle of birth and decay. Red connotes passion – the passion of political determination, struggle, and defense. The Ashanti also believe that red holds protective powers. Black denotes seriousness, union with ancestors and implies spiritual awareness.

I wear my skirt with pride knowing that my ancestors were amazing and talented people.

Aubrianna Jordan, CPG
As we embark on a new school year amidst an everchanging healthcare climate, it is important to take stock and invest in our own continued mental health and wellbeing. Along with the incredible resources and guidance of Midwestern counselors, faculty mentors, and advisors, here are some more ways you can remind yourself to reconnect, recharge, and revamp into a healthier, stronger you!

**Mental Health Moment**

**Meditate/Pray**

**BREATHE:**
4 seconds in
7 seconds hold
8 seconds out

**Spend some time outside**

**Chat with a friend or loved one**

**Move your body!**

**Sleep**

**Cook something yummy**

**Organize your space or schedule**

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**Vietnamese 'End of Summer' Rolls**

Dr. Thu Huynh, Glendale Campus

**Roll Ingredients:**
- Vermicelli Noodles
- Rice Paper
- Protein: Frozen shrimp a/o pork
- Lettuce
- Mint Leaves
- Chives

**Sauce Ingredients:**
- 2 tbsp Hoisin Sauce
- 2 tbsp Peanut Butter
- ½ cup Water
- Optional: Chili sauce

**For the Sauce:**
1. Combine ingredients and mix.
2. Heat for 30 sec in the microwave.
3. Adjust with water for desired consistency.

**For the Rolls:**
1. Boil noodles per package instructions.
2. Steam shrimp and/or pork.
3. Dip rice paper in water and lay on a flat surface.
4. Lay ingredients in a row.
5. Roll & Enjoy!