PEER BIAS LEADERS NEWSLETTER
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2020

Welcome to the Peer Bias Leaders Newsletter. We are the Peer Bias Leaders, a student-led equity and inclusivity group at Haddonfield Memorial High School. Each month, we plan to release a monthly newsletter curated by students discussing the importance of equity through books, articles, discussion topics, and more. With this newsletter, we hope to foster conversations and self-education that act as the foundation for change within our community.

During this holiday season, we would like to look at the impact of **Stereotypes.** These dangerous assumptions about our fellow peers not only hurt those involved, but also alter the perception of an entire group of people. As we enter the new year, we encourage all of our readers to challenge stereotypes within their own communities, to look at how we retell the history of the past, and tips on having meaningful conversations about these topics with your family.

- Mehki Rippey, President of the Peer Bias Leaders

Discussion Topics:
- How to Navigate Difficult Conversations During the Holiday Season
  This article contains helpful tactics on how to navigate talking to relatives this holiday season, in a year as tumultuous and controversial as 2020. It is important to keep yourself and your loved ones healthy this year, but if you are fortunate enough to celebrate the holidays with someone, this article offers advice for not only having healthy and productive conversations, but also prioritizing and taking care of your mental health. Although engaging in the tension of this holiday season may be new territory for some families, having these difficult conversations is the first step to creating significant social change.

- Thank You, Next
  This episode of the NPR podcast, Code Switch, provides methods and examples for how people across the U.S. are handling divisive conversations at the holiday dinner table. It discusses how identity can impact the family dynamic, and offers advice for people who are going home to unwelcoming or disapproving families. Please note that this episode of Code Switch contains strong language.

Reading
- *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, a staple of sophomore year english classes, takes place in Nigeria on the cusp of colonialism. It tells the story of the downfall of a man and how his stories can be manipulated by outsiders. When outsiders manipulate the narrative it can lead to harmful stereotypes. An insightful quote from Achebe is included at the end of this edition of the newsletter.

- *A Mercy* by Toni Morrison: Morrison's novel, which is read by most Accel English 11 students, is set in early colonial America, just as many systems and forces or racism were developing. Told through the perspective of a diverse set of characters, this novel helps one understand the feelings at the root of modern racial issues. Some of the content may not be suitable for younger readers.

- *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie won the National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction in 20113 and was Listed among the New York Times Book Review's "Ten Best Books of 2013". This book handles race from the perspective of an outsider. Truly feeling her race for the first time, Adichie reflects on some of her own experiences through her main character Ifemelu.

Podcast of the Month
- [Stereotypes in Pop Culture](#)
  This playlist of podcasts includes an overview of stereotypes and their origins and experiences from those who have been stereotyped. One of the podcasts, "Playing with Perceptions" from the TED Radio Hour, poses and answers questions like where stereotypes come from and what the consequences of stereotypes are. Another podcast on the list, "The Mash-Up Americans", talks about the experiences of Asian Americans, with the stereotype of being viewed as the model minority. The Podcast Brunch Club even has some questions to think about during the podcasts to examine and reflect on the stereotypes you have experienced and the ones that you have put on others.

Video Resources
- [Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story | TED Talk](#)
  In this powerful TED Talk, Adichie talks about her experiences with reading and writing, and her conclusion that hearing one single story about any person or thing is what truly causes problems. When a group is reduced to a single story, people only see one side of who those people are, which is where stereotypes are created. These things snowball, until an entire population has a false view of a different population because of this single story theyre being told. Adichie explains that this is why it is vital that cultures have people who can tell their stories truly and authentically, so that they can represent themselves and portray an accurate picture of who they are.
- [Clint Smith: The Danger of Silence | TED Talk](#)
  In this TED Talk, Clint Smith talks about his experience as a teacher, showing his students how to recognize the "silences in their own lives," and the dangers of these silences. He believes that it is essential to fight against prejudice by refusing to be silent: using your voice for good and speaking up against what is unjust. This will help us to create a more equitable world, one in which we treat each other with more kindness and respect.

Quote of the Month:

"Until the lions have their historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter."
~ Chinua Achebe