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Feb. 24, 2022

To: ODDS Staff and Partners

From: Lilia Teninty, Director, Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS)

Subject: ODDS celebrates Black History Month

ODDS joins the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) in celebrating Black History Month. In his letter to ODHS employees, Director Fariborz Pakseresht reminded us that Black history is American history. We honor Black leaders past and present whose voices, advocacy, courage, perseverance and sacrifice have and continue to inspire the equity work of ODHS and ODDS.

One such leader and advocate in Oregon's intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) community is Donna Stoney. Donna was the first Black case manager in Multnomah County's I/DD system. She went on to found and manage group homes for Oregonians with I/DD. In recent years, Donna expanded her advocacy work to Oregon's wine industry. Read more about Donna's story and career on the ODDS website at <https://go.usa.gov/xtJXK>.

I encourage you to learn more about the contributions of Black self-advocates, their history and current voices in the I/DD community.

- [Betty Williams](#) (1959–2016), a state and national leader in the self-advocacy movement, served on the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities under President Obama and on the boards of Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered, the American Association of People with Disabilities, and The Arc of The United States. Betty deeply influenced me in my early career when I worked with her in Indiana.

- [Andraéa Lavant](#) is founder of LaVant Consulting Inc., a social impact communications firm that specializes in empowering brands to “speak disability with confidence.” She is also the Impact Producer of the Oscar-nominated documentary “[Crip Camp](#).”
- “[The Intersections and Divergences of Disability and Race](#)” by Keith Rosenthal.
- The documentary “[Black Disabled Men Talk Episode 6: Black Ableism](#)” is about the work of the Anti-Eugenics Project.
- ChrisTiana ObeySumner is the CEO and principal consultant at [Epiphanies of Equity, LLC](#). ChrisTiana writes and speaks about the intersections of race and disability in “[#DisabilitySoWhite: Reflections on Race and Disability on ADA Day](#)” and in the video “[Discussing Race and Disability with ChrisTiana ObeySumner](#).”
- “[Black History Month: Prominent African Americans with Disabilities](#)” by Advancing Opportunities.

In a recent ODDS meeting, a self-advocate said that over the last two years, the pandemic separated and isolated us. It’s now time to come back together and in a way that is inclusive of all voices.

I agree. I always view my role to support and encourage children and adults with I/DD, but we can’t have equity and inclusion without including and engaging those within the I/DD community who are Black, Indigenous and people of Color, and other intersecting identities. I invite you to join me in recommitting to the essential work of celebrating and engaging Black advocates in Oregon.

Sincerely,



Lilia Teninty  
 Director  
 Office of Developmental Disabilities Services

*Previous ODDS Director’s Messages are available at <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/SENIORS-DISABILITIES/DD/Pages/messages.aspx>*

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