

World Braille Day Highlights Importance of Accessible Information

By UN News Staff

People with vision impairment are more likely to experience higher rates of poverty, neglect and violence. The coronavirus pandemic and its consequent impact, such as lockdowns, has worsened their challenges, isolating them further.

According to World Health Organization (WHO) estimates, around 2.2 billion people globally have a vision impairment, of whom at least 1 billion have a vision impairment that could have been prevented, or is yet to be addressed.

Braille and COVID-19

The pandemic has also underscored the importance of making information available in more accessible formats – including in Braille and on audio platforms – to that everyone can access vital information to protect themselves and help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

The UN, for its part, has implemented several good practices to promote an inclusive response to the pandemic. In Malawi, for instance, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) produced 4,050 braille products on spreading awareness and prevention of COVID-19, while in Ethiopia, the UN human rights office (OHCHR) published audio information, education and communication materials, to media professionals, and developed them in Braille formats.

Similarly, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) produced guidance notes in multiple languages and accessible formats, including Braille, on considerations for children and adults with disabilities in the response to COVID-19.

The World Day

Observed annually on 4 January, World Braille Day was established by the UN General Assembly in December 2018. The date also marks the birth anniversary of Louis Braille, who at the age of 15, invented the tactile system for reading and writing for use by people who are blind or visually impaired.

Braille is read by passing one's fingertips over an arrangement of between one to six embossed dots, which represent letters, numbers as well as musical and mathematical symbols. Braille can be written using a Braillewriter, a device similar to a typewriter, or by using a pointed stylus and a Braille Slate to punch dots on paper.



The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD) cites the universal system as a means of communication; and regards it as essential in education, freedom of expression and opinion, access to information and social inclusion for those who use it.

Source:
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/01/1081312#:~:text=World%20Braille%20Day%20highlights%20importance%20of%20accessibl,e%20information,-UNICEF%2FMichele%20Sibiloni&text=The%20United%20Nation,s%20is%20commemorating,blind%20and%20partially%20sighted%20people.>



January 2021 Calendar

National Birth Defects Prevention Month
Thyroid Awareness Month

- 1 – New Year's Day
- 4 – World Braille Day
- 5 – Twelfth Night (Christian)
- 10-12 – Mahayana New Year (Buddhist)
- 13 – Korean American Day (US)
- 13 – Lori-Maghi (Sikh)
- 18 – Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday (US)
- 20 – Inauguration Day (US)
- 26 – Republic Day of India (India)
- 28 – Tu B'Shvat (Jewish)



New Year Traditions of Mahayana Buddhism

Mahayana Buddhists celebrate the new year by honoring and praying for Buddha and other deities. Every Buddhist is expected to visit a nearby temple to light candles which are believed to bring happiness and good luck for the commencing year. Songs are sung as an offering to deities while statues of Buddha are washed as a sign of respect. Mahayana Buddhism is the largest sub-division of the Buddhist religion. Mahayana Buddhists believe enlightenment can be acquired during one's lifetime. They also believe that not only nuns and monks can achieve it, but also ordinary Buddhists. As the dominant faith within Northern and Eastern parts of Asia, key traditions in Mahayana Buddhism include Chinese Chan, Nichiren, Pure Land, Korean Seon, Tiantai, and Zen.



New Year for the Japanese Zen

Holiday celebrations at Japanese Zen temples are rather solemn. Unique ceremonies start at about 5pm on New Year's Eve where the individual starts to contemplate on his/her previous year's life events. Again the goal is to "awaken" one's self and make the necessary goals for next year. After which, the fire ceremony is observed. Buddhists are firm believers of karma or the positive and negative consequences of an individual's actions. For Buddhists, negative karmas are considered fires in life and are noted to accumulate as time goes by. With the fire ceremony, an individual writes in a piece of paper symbolizing the relinquishment of karma. Afterwards, the paper is tossed in the fire which eventually signifies the reduction of the accumulated negative karma.

After cleaning up karma with fire, celebration and meditation follows at 7:30pm. At around 10:13pm, the bell ringing ceremony starts and will last until midnight or the 12:01am mark. And when New Year finally arrives, it's the perfect time for merrymaking and feasting.

Source: <https://www.worldreligionnews.com/religion-news/buddhism/how-mahayana-buddhists-celebrate-new-year>

Quick Interpreting Tip: Screening Conversations

We've all run across a situation where we're tempted to screen a dialogue during an interpreting assignment, whether it's by omitting information that appears irrelevant and superfluous, or by adding information for further clarity.

Before you do so, remember your role as an interpreter and that it is not your place to decide what is to be rendered and what isn't. We are merely a conduit and not a filter, so next time you feel the urge, try to hold your tongue.

Remember: your role as an interpreter is to stay true to the intention of the original message by relaying only everything that is said and nothing that wasn't said.

Source: <https://shenyunwu.wordpress.com/2013/12/25/quick-interpreting-tip-screening-conversations/>



New Staff Profile: Marysol Laguna



Marysol Laguna the newest bilingual professional to join the UCDH Medical Interpreting Team. She was born in Guadalajara Jalisco, Mexico and moved to the United States at the age of 2. Born with bright red hair and blue eyes, her mom found it fitting to uniquely spell her name with a "Y" instead of an "I" and her name is the literal Spanish translation for Sea and Sun, (Mar Y Sol) Mar = Sea Y= and Sol= Sun.

Marysol grew up speaking English and Spanish and has always had a passion about languages. She visited Guadalajara Jalisco, Mexico often and taught English to adults during her vacations. She has had vast experience within the healthcare industry where she discovered her true passion for interpreting, later leaving her full-time job to open her own business, Sol Interpreting. As a National Certified Interpreter, she has worked and specialized in medical interpreting and workers compensation cases. She is honored to join such a great team and loves her job as an interpreter.

Welcome to the UCDH Medical Interpreting team, Marysol!