

Diversitynews

Recent and up-coming events plus updates from the CABM Diversity Committee



MISSION STATEMENT

The goal of the CABM Diversity Committee (CDC) is to act as DEIA advocates. Following the lead of University Equity and Inclusion, the CDC seeks to turn ideals into action, making CABM a safe and supportive space.

CALL TO ACTION

The committee is still looking for CABM volunteers to help improve DEIA efforts. If you are interested, please contact: diversity@cabm.rutgers.edu or reach out to a current committee member!

HIGHLIGHTS EDITION: CABM DIVERSITY CULTURE SUB-COMMITTEE



October and November are packed with holidays and celebrations. This year all of CABM got to experience and learn about many new cultures and traditions thanks to the CABM

diversity culture sub-committee and November's tea time organizers (the Michael Manhart Lab). Polish-American Heritage Month was celebrated first with mountains of pierogis at CABM's inaugural pierogi party. The Latin-American holiday Dia De Los Muertos was then celebrated at the CABM tea time with Mexican snacks and colorful calaveras (decorated skulls). Finally the Hindu festival of lights, Diwali, was celebrated, again at CABM's weekly tea time, with Indian sweets and sparklers. The people that put together all these events are compassionate, dedicated, and inspired. We want to thank them all in this newsletter. Keep reading as we introduce our CDC culture sub-committee and our other fellow CABM members.

**PIEROGI
PARTY!**



CABM Diversity Committee 2023



Meet the People Behind the Magic



Special shout out to Rachana Rao Battaje (left above) and Duhita Sant (right above) in the Manhart lab for organizing two cultural tea times.

CABM Diversity Committee (CDC) and the Manhart Lab organized a Diwali celebration on November 9th in Aaron's Atrium and the CABM/Waksman courtyard. The attendees learned about the celebration, lit sparklers, and enjoyed delicious treats like jalebi, samosas, and kachori! The word 'Diwali' derives from Sanskrit and means "a

row of lights." A special thank you to Ashima Chopra, Duhita Sant, Iman Biswas, Battaje Rachana Rao, Ruchi Yadav, and Natalie Losada for organizing the event!



Mary Lally, MS CDC Culture Sub-Committee Chair

Mary Lally is a 3rd year PhD candidate studying the effects of antibiotics on both the microbiome and the host in the Martin Blaser Lab. What inspires her as chair of the CDC culture sub-committee is the desire to create a space where everyone feels welcomed and respected. She wants CABM to be a place where people learn about diverse experiences and traditions in addition to their work. "Such an environment allows for people to be themselves and comfortable at work and for productivity to increase." Mary's favorite holiday to learn about was Diwali. "Lighting sparklers in the courtyard, eating delicious Indian treats, and reading the informational poster board helped me learn more about lighting diyas and the celebration in general."



Ashima Chopra, PhD CDC Culture Sub-Committee Member and Tea Time Specialist

Ashima Chopra is a postdoc with Eddy Arnold, working on structure-based discovery of antivirals against viruses like HIV-1, SARS CoV-2, and Dengue virus. Ashima loves exchanging knowledge of cultures. "It is enjoyable (and important) to learn how other cultures and ethnic groups conduct their events, trying new foods, and participating in customs. I want to give back to these events as much as I get out of them." Of all the cultural events that Ashima has helped organize, her favorite and most memorable have been the Hispanic Heritage Month coffee hours. "I have learned a lot about Hispanic contributions to all walks of society."

... and the Magic Behind the People

Manhart Lab members, with special thanks to Rachana Battje and Duhita Sant, arranged a Dia De Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) themed tea time on November 2nd with Mexican snacks, (image below) including cookies, tortilla chips with dips, burrito bites, fried plantains (called plantanos of maduros) and Jarritos. It was a great start to the November festivals. The calaveras, or decorated skulls (image right) are to honor family or friends that have been lost.



JOIN THE CDC CULTURE SUB-COMMITTEE

The sub-committee highlights DEIA events by organizing themed tea times and cultural coffee hours, planning DEIA-centered arts and craft events, and bringing DEIA trainings to CABM. We also try to provide educational materials at events and in lobby slides to foster an inclusive community at CABM. Please email us if you have ideas or want to get involved!

Email Mary Lally at: mcl227@gsbs.rutgers.edu



CABM Diversity Culture Sub-Committee organized a celebration for Polish American Heritage Month on October 30th. Attendees enjoyed homemade pierogis and completed a crossword puzzle while learning about famous Polish Americans! Thank you to Barbara Gruszka, and her family, for preparing 400 pierogis for the event!! Fun fact:

Polish American Heritage Month was previously celebrated in August. The celebration was changed to October to commemorate the first Polish settlers in Jamestown, VA, who arrived in October of 1608, as well as the death of Casimir Pulaski, the father of American cavalry.



Rachana Rao Battaje, PhD Manhart Lab Member

Rachana Battaje is a postdoc in the Manhart Lab studying the variations in bacterial response to antibiotics under stress. Being Indian, Rachana loves exchanging cultural practices with the diverse community at CABM. She says celebrating festivals from different parts of the world is the easiest way to learn. "These festivals open up the mind and the soul, while the body gets to eat yummy food." Before organizing the tea time, Rachana's only Dia de Los Muertos education was from watching 'Coco!' "Organizing a tea time themed for Dia de Los Muertos was when I truly learned about the day of honoring the dead and traditions it involved."

Barbara Gruszka, AB CDC Culture Sub-Committee Member

Barbara Gruszka is a PhD student studying neuronal activity and plasticity underlying motor behavior using multi-photon holographic optogenetics in the Ian Oldenburg Lab. She is inspired by CABM's diverse faculty, staff, and students and by the individuals that are actively advocating for underrepresented communities. "Creating opportunities for inclusivity and cultural learning enhances our sense of community, belonging, and awareness." Barbara enjoyed celebrating India's Independence Day and learning the history behind this important day.

