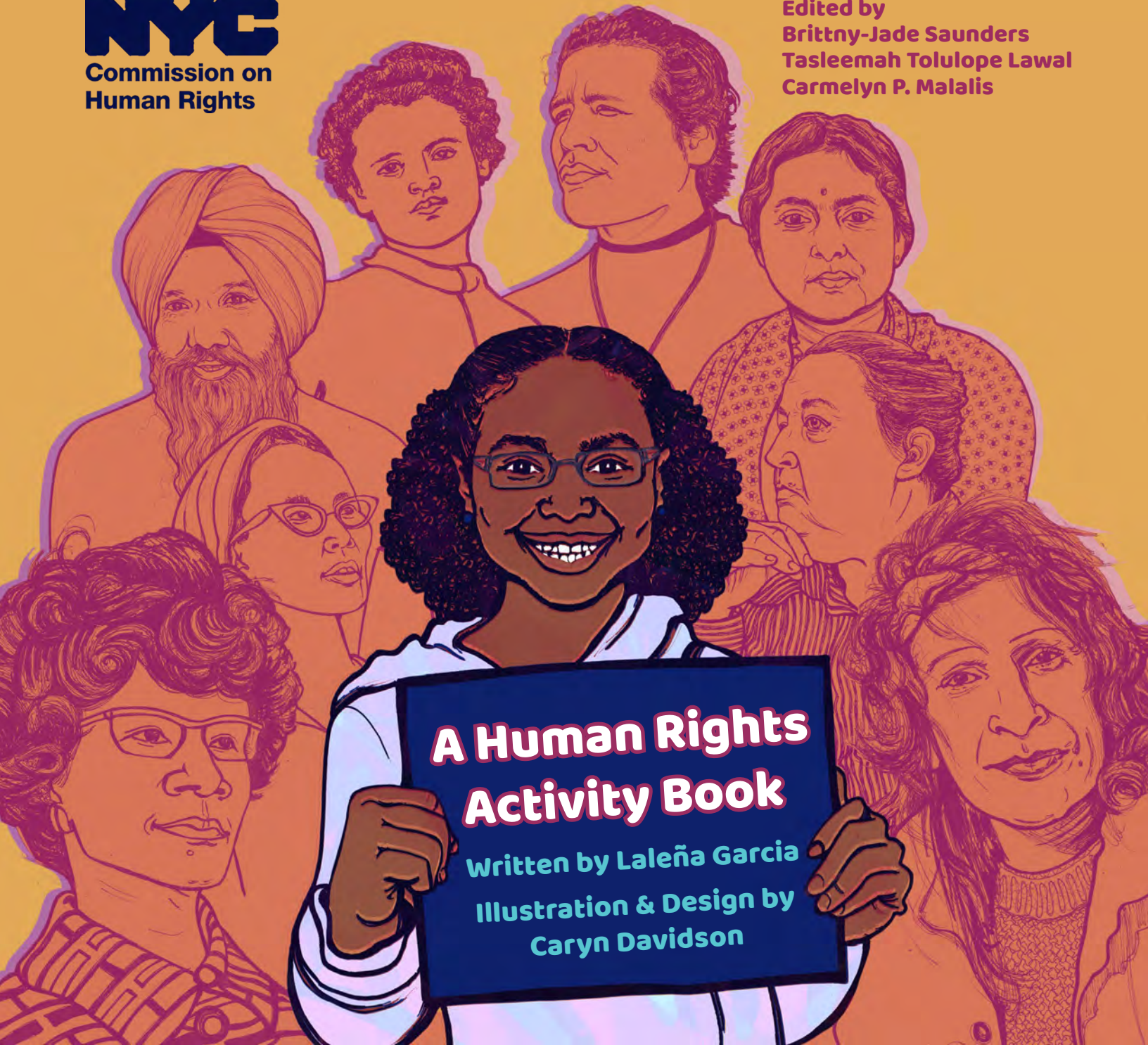


YOU HAVE RIGHTS

NYC
Commission on
Human Rights

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A Human Rights Activity Book

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About The New York City Commission On Human Rights

The NYC Commission on Human Rights (also known as the 'Commission' or 'CCHR') is an agency - a government organization - that protects human rights here in our city. This means that if someone is treated unfairly, that person can go to the agency for help and protection. This agency also educates the public (all of us, the people) about the laws that exist to protect us, so that we know how to treat other people and how other people must treat us. You will learn all about the human rights that the Commission protects in this book. You will also get a chance to think about the ways you can protect people's human rights - we all have a responsibility to work together so that our communities are places where everyone feels seen, safe, and respected. People who work for the Commission currently speak over 30 different languages so that they can communicate with all New Yorkers and represent the communities in our city.

Dear New Yorkers of All Ages,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you "You Have Rights," a project that is truly close to my heart. As both the Commissioner for Human Rights in New York City and as the mother of two elementary school children, I have dreamed of an activity book on human rights that could be designed for young people while accessible to New Yorkers of all ages. Given the diversity of our city and the complexity of many human rights issues, such a task is no easy feat. However, with the help of our wonderful team at the Commission, a talented pair of educators, and many government and community partners, we are presenting to you this beautiful book that aims to do just that. We put together "You Have Rights" so that New Yorkers of all ages could learn more about how the New York City Human Rights Law – one of the most robust human rights and civil rights laws in the nation – protects them and also get to know some of the amazing people who have fought for our communities' human rights. We also thought it was important to teach people about cultural and religious traditions that are cherished by so many New Yorkers, yet may be less known to people outside of the communities that celebrate or observe them. Demystifying different groups' experiences and making widely known the beauty of New York's diversity is such an important part of what our agency does to help our city become more inclusive. You may be surprised by similarities among different communities and celebrations. You may discover things you never knew or thought about. You may look at issues or people with more openness or with fresh eyes.

We know that there is so much more to be said on each topic included in this book. We know that there is more nuance to each issue than can be addressed. And certainly, there are more human rights issues, communities, human rights activists, and cultural and religious celebrations than we could cover. Please take this book as a starting place to teach, learn, foster discussion, and open minds to other topics that can be featured in the future. Further, our understanding of human rights and how different communities self-identify often shifts with time. This book chronicles and uses words consistent with how we understand human rights as of June 2021. We welcome and embrace this continued evolution with humility and solidarity.

I am so excited to share this labor of love with you! I hope that it makes you feel proud to be who you are and to be in New York City. I hope you feel seen, and I hope you are inspired to see people you have not understood or appreciated in the past. I hope that it makes you believe that you can be a champion for human rights like so many before you. And just as importantly, I hope that it inspires you to speak up for human rights and act in support of your fellow New Yorkers.

With love and admiration for the beauty you add to my favorite city,
Commissioner Carmelyn P. Malalis



NYC
HUMAN RIGHTS

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This book includes portraits of people with identities that connect to the human rights categories you will learn about. Some aspects of identity are visible, others are not. When you are coloring in the portrait art, think about the ways you connect to each category.




Commissioner Carmelyn P. Malalis

Types of activities in this book

This key explains what type of activity each icon is encouraging you to do. You can choose to record what you do even if it doesn't suggest that. There are many ways you can record your expressions - with a device (phone, ipad, etc.), with paper and pen, or photographs.

 = Take photo or video with a phone, camera or any device

 = Express yourself or role play with a friend or classmate

 = Talk to a friend, adult, family member or classmate

 = Write in the book

 = Reflect, think, imagine

 = Research in a book or on the internet, share what you learn

 = Draw in the book and/or on separate paper

 = Search around your space for objects and artifacts

What are human rights?

Have you ever thought about **what it means to be free**? What does the word “freedom” mean to you? Do you know people who have more freedom or less freedom? Human rights are the freedoms that you have just because you are human!



Human rights mean that you and **all the people in our city have the right to live a safe, fair and free life**. You have the right to be yourself and to get the things you need. You have the right to be respected. All people in New York City have these rights, and it’s the job of the Commission on Human Rights to protect these rights for everyone — that means you too!

Having human rights means it’s not okay for anyone to treat you like you’re not as good as them, and it’s not okay for anyone to treat you less well because of your race, religion, gender, disability, the country you or your parents came from, who you are attracted to, or other identity issues and characteristics protected under the law.

Different countries often have their own documents that list the rights their citizens have. Here in the United States, the Constitution — especially the Bill of Rights — helps to explain some of our rights. You might have learned about the Constitution in school, and you have all those rights; you also have some rights that are NOT in the Constitution! New York City has a history of protecting human rights, which is why the Commission was formed to foster respect among all New Yorkers.

★ **Reflection time! What helps you to respect other people?**



Human rights are for all humans

Human rights belong to all human beings, but that doesn't mean that all people's human rights have always been protected. Throughout our country's history, specific groups of people have had more power than other groups, and they have used that power to control other people's lives. Before Europeans came to America and colonized it (took over), there were millions of human beings living on this continent. Here, in what is now New York City, thousands of Lenape people made their homes and built communities. These Native American or Indigenous people had their own guidelines, cultural practices and systems for making sure that everyone was respected and protected.

In order to build the United States that we know now, the Europeans who colonized this land chose to not respect the human rights of the Native American or Indigenous people they found living on the land the colonizers wanted. Those people were prevented from practicing their culture, living freely on their land, and controlling their own society. To justify stealing the land and hurting the people living here, Europeans made up a story that said that they were better than other people, and based this idea on the color of their skin; they said that people with lighter skin were better than people with darker skin. They also said that their religion was the only true religion, and this gave them the right to go around the world taking people's land, hurting them, and making them change the ways they lived. Europeans used this story as an excuse for not respecting the human rights of many other people — the Native American or Indigenous people who lived here, the African people who were brought here against their will and enslaved, and many other people who came to this country over the years. **This story is called white supremacy.** White supremacy places white people and white cultures above others. It can be used as a harmful tool by people of all races and identities.

★ **Reflection time! What do you know about the contacts between Europeans and Native American or Indigenous people?**



White supremacy is harmful and hurts everyone; it hurts some groups of people so much that we need to have special laws to make sure that everyone's human rights are respected. In the United States, some people who have been especially harmed by this story and other similar stories are people from other countries, women, people with darker skin, people who are not Christian, people with disabilities, and people who are LGBTQIA+. Human rights laws remind people that everyone has the same rights and seek to create justice. **Justice is when everyone can enjoy their rights, and those rights are protected.**

Why do we need to protect human rights?

Even though there are rules about how to treat people, sometimes those rules aren't followed. One way to make sure people follow the rules is to make sure that **everyone** knows what the rules are. This book can help with that!

Another way to make sure people follow the rules is to make sure there are consequences if the rules are broken. This can mean helping people who are hurt when other people break the rules, making people who haven't followed the rules fix the problems they've caused, and making sure people follow the rules in the future.

★ **Reflection time! What helps you to respect other people?**



Who helps to protect our rights?

We all do! As New Yorkers, **we all have the responsibility to respect each other's rights.** There's also a special agency to help us. In NYC, the Commission on Human Rights has the special job of protecting our human rights. If someone is being treated unfairly because of the color of their skin, their religion, what country they are from, their gender, or other things that are part of who they are or their life experience, that person can go to the Commission for help. If someone was keeping you from getting what you need, they can help make sure you have access to (can get) what you need. If someone is not respecting you, they can make them stop and hold them accountable. You may get what's called a "settlement" which means that you get some kind of support, agreement on how people act in the future, or "compensation" (money) for having been wronged and mistreated.

There are also many organizations in this city, country, and world that work to protect human rights — human rights are important! There are even more activists who work for those organizations and for the **movements of people who fight for change and justice.**



★ **Reflection time! Why do you think it's important for all of us to protect everyone's human rights?** 

Human Rights Protections based on

Race

Race is a human-made system of categorizing people, based on their skin color and where their ancestors came from. When you think about your race, you might think about your culture and traditions, where your family or ancestors are from, or what you look like. All people have a race, and no race is any better than any other race. That means that no matter what your race is, you have the same rights as everyone else. No one is allowed to hurt you, keep you from getting the things you need, or mistreat you based on your race or the color of your skin.

You have the right to...

- **wear your hair however you choose without anyone telling you that you have to change it.**
- **go shopping without anyone following you around the store because of who you are.**
- **be proud of who you are, how you look and how you express your race and culture without anyone making you feel like there is something wrong with that.**
- **be in or walk through the park or any other public places.**



Ty Defoe

Activities: Write, Discuss, Create

★ **Reflection time!** What words do you use to describe your race? How old were you when you figured out what your race was?



★ **Express yourself!** Have you ever been in a situation where you were the only person of your race around? Record yourself or tell someone about that time: How old were you? Where were you? How did it feel? Has it happened lots of times, only a few times, or never? Why do you think that is?

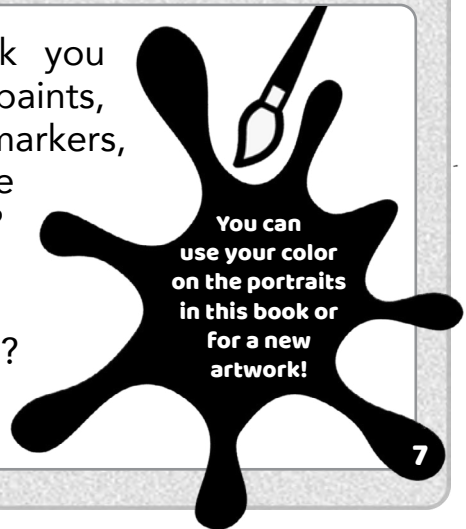


★ **Reflect further!** Are you the same race as all the people in your family? As all or most of your friends? As most of the people in your school?



★ **Art time!** Do you think you could mix colors (with paints, chalk, watercolors, markers, anything) to make the exact shade of your skin?

What would you call the unique color of your skin?



You can use your color on the portraits in this book or for a new artwork!

Protections based on Religion

In New York City, there are many, many different belief systems, or religions. Some people believe in God or a god, some people believe in multiple gods and some people do not believe in any gods. Some people pray, some people have special meals together, some people sit in silence with other members of their religious community, some people fast together (fast means not eating for a particular amount of time), and some people sing together. Some people practice their religion by doing all of these things! People who practice the same religion might gather together in someone's home, or in another place like a mosque, temple, church, meeting-house, or somewhere else. No religion is better than any other religion. People do not have to have any religion at all! Every person in NYC gets to choose what they believe and how they want to practice their religion.

You have the right to...

- **practice your religion the way that feels good to you and your family**
- **wear clothing or accessories at school, in public and at work — including symbols of faith — that fit your religious beliefs, and no one can tell you to change it.**
- **take a day off from school or work to celebrate a holiday in your religion — you have the right to do that without negative consequences like having your pay taken away or your grade changed.**
- **ask your school or job for a space to observe or practice your religion**



Activities: Draw, Reflect, Express, Learn!

★ **Art time!** Draw some symbols of your religion. What does each one mean?



★ **Reflection time!** What are some religions you know that are NOT ones you practice? What do you know about those religions? How did you find those things out? Bonus: Make a list on separate paper of all the things you know about other religions that are NOT about holidays.



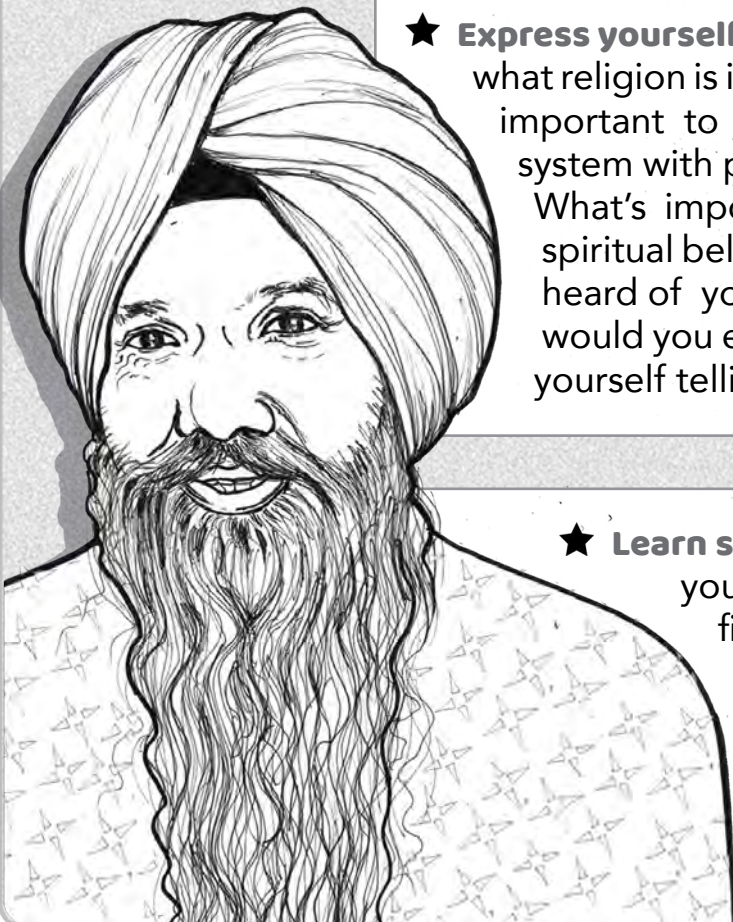
★ **Express yourself!** Do you practice a religion? If so, what religion is it? If not, what are some values that are important to you? Do you practice your religion or value system with people in your family or in your community? What's important to you about your religion, values, or spiritual beliefs? Imagine meeting someone who's never heard of your religion, values, or spiritual beliefs: how would you explain your beliefs to them? Make a movie of yourself telling them, or write down what you would say.



★ **Learn something new!** What are some religions you have questions about? How could you find out about those religions?



Bonus: Interview someone in your life who practices a different religion than you do. Find out what they feel is important for people to know about their religion.



Protections based on

Gender

Everyone in NYC has the same rights, no matter what their gender. There are many ways people discriminate based on gender, and none of them are okay. These include telling everyone they have to be one of only two genders [girl or boy] and that there are activities, clothes, feelings, ideas, games, and jobs that are only for one of those genders or treating people of one gender less well. You might see this when people say things like, "Only girls can wear makeup." "Only boys can play sports." "Girls don't do math." "Boys don't cry." Telling people what they can or can't do, think, or feel based on their gender hurts everyone.

Another way is by thinking that transgender people aren't as important or shouldn't be treated as well as cisgender people. [When a baby is born, their grown-ups generally decide whether to call the baby a girl or a boy. Sometimes that decision doesn't match with who the person really is, and a person is transgender. Sometimes that decision does match with who the person really is, and that person is cisgender.] All people have the right to listen to their own heart and mind to decide what words they will use to describe their gender; they also have the right to have other people use the same words. Some words people use include: non-binary, girl, woman, two-spirit, boy, gender fluid, or man. There are other words, too!

You have the right to...

- **attend school and not be made uncomfortable by someone commenting on how your body looks, even if they say it's a compliment.**
- **decide if/how someone else can touch your body.**
- **use the bathroom that feels right for you based on the gender that matches how you feel about yourself, and no one can tell you not to.**
- **play on the sports team that matches your gender.**
- **not respond to questions about your gender or body; no one is allowed to ask you if you're "a real boy/man" or "a real girl/woman."**
- **be called by the name and gendered pronoun that feel right to you; your boss or teacher can't decide they want to use your "old name."**

Marsha P. Johnson



Sylvia Rivera

Activities: Discover, Research & Reflect!

★ **Scavenger hunt!** Find (or make!) 3-5 things in your home that you feel represent your gender. Take a photo of each one, and think of a caption for each photo. **Bonus:** Put them all together and think of a title for your art piece.



★ **Learning time!** Here are some words that a person might use to describe their gender. Circle all the ones you know. Put a star next to all the ones you have questions about. Add any others you have heard or use for yourself.



Girl

Transmasc

Transgirl

Femme

Non-binary

Boy

Trans

Two-spirit

Genderqueer

★ **Research time!** Here are some places you can find out more about gender:



a. **Girls for Gender Equity:** ggenyc.org

c. **Fierce!:** fiercenyc.org

b. **Advocates for Intersex Youth:**
interactadvocates.org

d. **GLSEN:** glsen.org

e. **The Center:** gaycenter.org/family-youth/youth

f. **PFLAG:** pflag.org

g. **Hetrick Martin Institute for LGBTQ+ Youth:** hmi.org



★ **Reflection time!** What questions do you have for the people with genders who are different from yours? What would you like people to know about your gender?



★ **Helpful reminders about pronouns:** Everyone gets to choose the words that feel right to them. Some people use they and them; some people use she and her; some people use he and him; some people choose other words, like hir, or ze; some people use a mix of these words.

Human Rights Protections based on

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is about who we might have a crush on, or fall in love with. Words like “gay,” “lesbian,” “queer,” “bisexual,” “straight,” “asexual,” and “pansexual,” are all words that people use to describe their sexual orientation; people use lots of other words, too, and those words change! There are many ways to be attracted to (or not!) other people, and in New York City, they’re all protected under the law. There have been times and places where some people thought that the only okay sexual orientation was straight or heterosexual — for example, women could only be attracted to men, and men could only be attracted to women. We know that it’s okay for people to be attracted to anyone or no one, and it’s not okay to treat people who are (or seem to be) straight better than people who are not (or don’t seem to be) straight.

You have the right to...

- **like anyone, no matter what your or their gender is.**
- **hold hands, snuggle, kiss in public with someone who consents to that attention, and no one has the right to make you feel unsafe if you do any of these things.**
- **make a family with someone of the same gender.**
- **keep your sexual orientation to yourself — you don’t have to tell anyone who you like or have a crush on.**
- **decide who you want to have a relationship with, and you have the right to change your mind.**



Dennis
deLeon

Activities: Reflect, Imagine, Learn!

★ **Reflection time!** Why do you think some people care so much about who other people like, date, marry, or have relationships with? How does it make you feel to know that the way some people have relationships might not be the same as the way you want to have relationships? Why do you think that is?



★ **Share!** Do you know any people who use the words lesbian, gay, queer, bisexual, asexual, or pansexual to describe themselves? Talk about how you met them and anything else you know about them. What did it mean to you to meet them? Jot down people you want to share this with here.



★ **Research time!** Do some internet research on one or more of these people who might use these words to describe themselves. Did you learn anything surprising?



James Baldwin, Gilbert Baker, Audre Lorde, Frida Kahlo, Larry Kramer, Pauli Murray, Josephine Baker, Janelle Monáe, Julio Salgado, Karine Jean-Pierre, Helen Zia, Ricky Martin, X González, Ezra Miller, Kate McKinnon, Bowen Yang, Denice Frohman

**Protections
based on**

Immigration Status

“Immigration status” refers to what kind of paperwork a person filled out — if they filled out any — in order to move to the United States from another country. People move to the United States for lots of reasons: to be with their family, to find work, or to be safer than they were in the place where they lived before. Most of the people in New York City, their parents, grandparents or ancestors came here from somewhere else. That’s one of the things that makes NYC so great! Sometimes, when people are from another country, some other people might say they are “illegal,” and that’s not okay or true — no human being is illegal. All the people in New York City have the right to be here, work here, and go to school here without being treated differently because they moved here from another country or speak a different language.

You have the right to...

- **go to school or work without anyone asking what your immigration status is.**
- **be safe from hurtful language from your boss, your principal, your teachers, or your landlord.**
- **ask your landlord to fix things if your home needs repairs, even if they think you’re from another country.**
- **go to restaurants, stores, hospitals, and other public places without anyone asking about your immigration status.**
- **tell the Commission, without negative consequences, if someone does mistreat you because of your immigration status.**



Activities: Interview, Film, Collect, Draw!

★ **Interview time!** Where are some places your family lived before New York City? What are some family stories you know about the different places your family came from? Draw a picture of what you think those places look like.



★ **Movie time!** Interview someone who is from another country (they can be a friend, a family member, or anyone you know); if you have a cell phone that records video and it's okay with the other person, take video of this conversation.

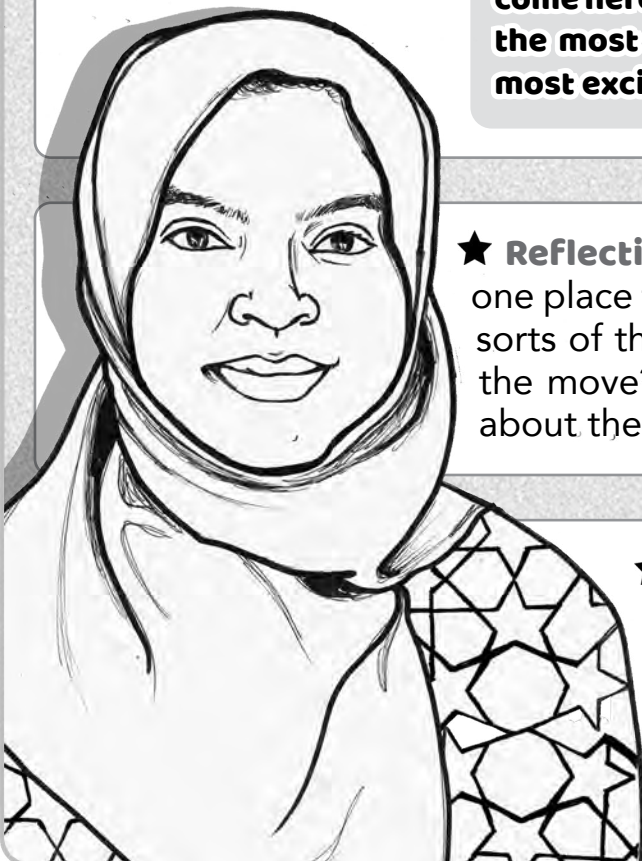


When did they come to New York City? Why did they come here? Is it like what they expected it to be? What's been the most surprising thing about living here? What was the most exciting part of their journey? The most challenging?

★ **Reflection time!** Has your family ever moved from one place to another? Where from and to? Why? What sorts of things changed about your family's life after the move? If you were to draw the feelings you had about the move, what colors would you use?



★ **Imagination time!** Do you think you could ever live someplace that was not NYC? Why or why not? Journal about why you think people might leave their home to make a new home in a different place.



Protections based on

Disability

Everyday we have to navigate the world around us in order to get the things we need. The choices people have made about how to set up our homes, workplaces and other spaces impact the way each of us interacts with the world.

A disability may impact your vision, hearing, thinking, feeling, learning, communicating, moving, or other parts of your life. You might use a wheelchair or cane to help you move around. You might need more time reading words to figure them out. You might need help feeling calm or well because of anxiety or depression. A disability can be something you are born with or the result of an illness or injury, like if you lose the ability to walk in an accident or you become hard of hearing as you get older. It can be something you have for a short period of time or for your entire life.

We should all support and uplift each other. Families, friends, employers, schools and businesses can do so by providing accommodations (flexibility) for people with disabilities. One thing we can learn from people with disabilities who have fought for human rights is that every person's way of navigating the world should be valued and respected.

You have the right to...

- **be able to get around your school, workplace, or apartment building.**
- **ask for accommodations at school if you have a disability that means you need wheelchair access, extra time on tests, or another type of flexibility.**
- **use a service animal if you need one.**
- **miss school or work for treatments or doctor's appointments related to your disabilities.**
- **tell the Commission, without negative consequences, if your school or work doesn't respect your rights because of your disability.**



Infinity symbol of neurodiversity



Symbol from Jen White Johnson

Activities: Imagine, Reimagine, Learn!

★ **Learning time!** What are some disabilities you have questions about? Talk to your family and friends about disabilities they know of.



★ **Brainstorm!** Some words or phrases people use can be hurtful to folks with disabilities. What could you say instead of "That's crazy!" or "You must be blind!"?



★ **Imagination time!** How do you think it might feel to have a disability people can see? How do you think it might feel to have a disability people CAN'T see? What are some ways we can support disabled people, that also support ALL people?



Protections
based on

Age

No matter your age, you have rights! All of the rights explained in this book are for all people: kids, grownups, and older adults. It doesn't matter what year you were born in, how old (or young) you look, or if you have gray hair or wrinkles.



You have the right to...

- get a job based on your experience, not your age; no one can tell you you are too old or too young to be hired (if you are legally old enough to work)
- be judged by your actual performance on the job, not by someone's stereotypes about younger or older people

★ **Imagination time!** What do you think your life will be like in five years? Or ten? Or even twenty? What do you imagine it will be like to be a grownup? What are some of the things you think will be different? Do you think anything will be the same?



★ **Picture time!** Who are people in your life who are not the same age as you and who are important to you? What are some things that are special about them? Take (or draw) a picture of the two (or more!) of you doing something special together.



★ **Reflection time!** How do you see people differently because of age? How are you treated as a younger person? How do you see older adults in your life being treated compared to other adults?



Protections
based on

National Origin

National origin has to do with what country you, your family, or your ancestors are from. You have the right to be from anywhere in the world without someone treating you differently; all New Yorkers have the same rights.



You have the right to...

- **speaking another language without someone telling you to stop or making you feel unwelcome for speaking it.**
- **wearing clothing commonly worn in the country you, your family, or your ancestors are from without being treated meanly or teased by classmates, teachers, store workers, or employers for it.**
- **feeling comfortable and safe when eating food commonly eaten in the country you, your family, or your ancestors are from.**

★ **Reflection time!** Have you ever traveled to another country? What was it like? How did you get there? What did you notice while you were there? If you never have, what countries would you like to visit one day? Why? What do you think it would be like in that other place? How would you communicate? How would you feel: excited, scared, hopeful, nervous, curious, something else?



★ **Artifact Collection!** Find 3-5 objects that represent your family's country of origin. Take a picture of each one and tell a friend or classmate what each one means to you.



★ **Language exchange!** How many languages do you speak? What about your friends? What about your family members? Ask them to teach you a phrase in one of the languages they know. Practice it or record yourself practicing it. **Bonus:** Record a group of people all saying the same phrase in different languages!



Protections
connected to

Retaliation



Sometimes, when someone doesn't respect your rights (we call this "violating" your rights), they can try to get you not to report them, so they won't get in trouble. That's not okay! Trying to intimidate you, or threatening your job or grades if you tell someone else **ALSO** violates your rights!

★ **Movie or speech time!** Record yourself standing up for your rights. For example: Imagine you were in a store and someone accused you of stealing because of how you looked. What would you do? Who could you go to for support? Or, imagine you saw this happen to someone else. What would you say or do? **Bonus:** Grab some friends, and take turns practicing how to stand up for your rights.



★ **Role play!** Get a friend and think about a time someone disrespected your rights, and you didn't know what to do, or you wish you had reacted differently. Practice doing what you wish you had done. Then switch, so your friend can practice, too!



If someone violates any of the rights you've learned about in this book, you have the right to report them. You can tell a parent, a teacher, your principal, or another trusted adult. You can even tell the Commission!

(212) 416-0197 Help people learn about their rights by sharing this book!



Protections
connected to

Bias in Policing

Sometimes some police officers unfairly target people because of their race, gender identity, color, religion, national origin, age, housing status, sexual orientation, immigration status, disability, or gender - many of the things you've learned about in this book! This is not okay. The police cannot treat you differently based on your race, age, religion or another aspect of your identity that is listed above. This means that they can't stop you, tell you to leave an area, or prevent you from using public spaces like park benches because of who you are. If this happens, you can report the police to the Commission.



★ **Imagination time!** What does the word "safe" mean to you? What makes you feel safe? Who makes you feel safe? What are some places you go to when you want to feel safe? You can draw or journal about your answers.



★ **Picture time!** What are the things you think that all people need? See if you can take a picture of each one. If it's something that you can't touch, like an idea, take a picture of something that represents it, or use your imagination and draw it on separate paper.



★ **Learn something new!** Do you know about organizations in your community that help your community be stronger and keep community members safe? These might be church groups, tenants' rights organizations, mutual aid groups, neighborhood groups, or something else. Ask your friends and family members if they can think of any!



Joy, Power & Celebration

Human rights are the rights we all have as humans. When everyone's human rights are respected, it is good for everyone! Communities that take care of each other have a lot to celebrate, and there are many ways for us to celebrate together. Also, our communities have the power to stand together when something isn't fair, or people's rights aren't being respected; it's important that we stand up for each other and stand with each other.

You have the right to...

- **get together with your friends and community.**
- **use public spaces like parks and beaches.**
- **protest if you feel something needs to be changed, and to protest in public with other people.**

The more we learn, the more we can celebrate! You can learn more on your own, with your family, or even ask your teachers to learn about lots of different people in school. This might include asking to read books by authors with disabilities, learn Asian American history, find out about Black women engineers and mathematicians, learn about ways Native American/Indigenous people solved conflicts, explore geometry in mosques, and lots of other things. What are you excited to learn about?



★ **Reflection and writing time!** What are some of the things you enjoy doing with your community? Make a list here!



★ **Picture time!** Take pictures of some of your favorite places to go. Do you like to go to those places alone? With your friends? With your family? With someone else? You can take pictures of yourself in these places, or pick something about the place that makes it special.



★ **Imagination time!** When you dream the world you want to live in, what does it look like? Smell like? Sound like? Feel like? Taste like? Try writing a poem, creating visual art, or making movement art (maybe a dance, maybe something else!) that represents your dream world. Who would be there with you?



★ **Interview time!** Ask some people in your family or community what they think makes their community strong. You can record the interview on your phone, or write it down on separate paper.



★ **Drawing time!** Have you ever been to a protest, vigil, rally or demonstration? What was it about? How did it feel to see other people who felt the way you did? Draw a picture of a sign you might carry (or did carry!) to share your feelings and why you were protesting or demonstrating.





Celebrations & Holidays

The Commission honors many holidays and celebrations through which New Yorkers express the beauty of who they are and the traditions they cherish.

There are several different types of calendars in the world, including seasonal, solar, and lunar calendars. The Jewish/Hebrew and Islamic/Muslim calendars are lunar, based on the monthly movements of the moon. The 12-month calendar is called the Gregorian calendar. Many observances, like Ramadan, stretch across months in the Gregorian calendar because they follow lunar or other calendars. What calendar(s) does your family use? Which of the holidays and celebrations below do you want to learn more about?

- Kwanzaa
- Christmas
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- International Holocaust Remembrance Day
- Black History Month
- Black Lives Matter At School Week of Action
- National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
- Lunar New Year
- International Women's Day
- Stonewall Uprising Anniversary
- Mental Health Awareness Month
- National Suicide Prevention Month
- Yom Kippur
- Hispanic Heritage Month
- National Women's History Month
- Sexual Assault Awareness Month
- Day of Silence
- Holi
- Ramadan & Eid al-Fitr
- Nowruz
- Vesak
- Asian American Heritage Month
- Immigrant Heritage Month
- Easter
- Vaisakhi
- Cinco de Mayo
- Pride Month
- Juneteenth
- Eid al-Adha
- National Bullying Prevention Month
- National Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- National Coming Out Day
- Transgender Day of Remembrance
- Universal Human Rights Month
- Diwali
- Veterans Day
- AIDS Awareness Month
- World AIDS Day
- Hanukkah



Celebrations & Holidays

The Commission honors many holidays and celebrations through which New Yorkers express the beauty of who they are and the traditions they cherish.

★ **Express yourself!** Use this space to write and/or draw about the holidays that you and your family celebrate.



★ **Learn and discuss!** Choose one holiday from the page to the left that you do not know a lot about or have never heard of. Figure out how to learn about that holiday (search in books, online, or talk to people you know) and then share what you learn about it with a classmate, family member or friend.



Intersectionality

Lots of the rights you've been learning about are part of our identities. Your identity is who you are and know yourself to be; it has lots of different parts! When we talk about how the different parts of our identity come together, we are talking about how they intersect. Everybody has different ways their identities intersect, and this can affect how we experience the world. For example, somebody (like the author!) might be Black AND Queer AND a ciswoman. Someone else might be an immigrant AND transgender. Another person might be Muslim AND disabled AND Black. New York City has so many amazing kinds of people!

★ **Interview time!** Interview some friends and family members about their identities. Which parts can other people see? Which parts aren't visible? Which parts are important to them? Which parts are different from your identity? Which parts are the same? You can record them answering your questions, or write them down. After you interview a few people, what do you notice? How do you feel? Did you learn anything surprising?



★ **Reflection time!** What are some of the things that make you you? What parts of your identity do you think about the most? The least? Why do you think that is?



Joanna Nieh



Definitions

Activist	A person who works together with other people to make the world a better place.	p. 5
Agency	Government organization that has a particular job. The Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) has the job of protecting human rights in New York City.	inside cover
Alt text	A feature which allows you to add a descriptions for images that are specifically for blind users.	p. 33
Bias	An unfairly held belief about a group of people	p. 21
Cis (cisgender)	Describes people who identify as the same gender they were assigned at birth. For example, if the adult said “it’s a boy” and you continue to identify as a boy/man then you are cis or a cisman.	p. 10
Discrimination	Treating some people as though they’re not as good as other people or don’t have the same rights.	p. 10
Gender Binary	The idea that there are only two distinct and opposite genders – male and female. This idea is limiting and doesn’t have space for everyone’s gender.	p. 11
Gender Identity	An internal, deeply felt sense of being male, female, a blend of both, or neither—how a person thinks about themselves and what they call themselves. A person’s gender identity can be the same as or different from their sex assigned at birth.	pgs. 10 - 11
Identity	Who you are and know yourself to be. There are many aspects of a person’s identity, and each person is an expert on themself.	pgs. 1 - 3, 26
LGBTQIA	Umbrella term for people who do not identify as cisgender and/ or heterosexual (straight). Though some of the terms change and others are added, it currently stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or Questioning), Intersex, Asexual, and others.	p. 4
Non-binary	An umbrella term for people who do not identify within the gender binary (see above). Other terms for this might include gender expansive, gender creative, or genderqueer. Some non-binary people also identify as transgender or agender.	p. 10
Protest	A protest is when people get together in public to show that they are angry or upset with something that has happened and want things to change.	pgs. 22 - 23
Sexual Orientation	Describes who a person might fall in love with, like, or have a crush on. Some examples of sexual orientations are gay, lesbian, bisexual, straight, asexual or pansexual.	p. 12
Trans (transgender)	Describes people whose gender identity is not the same as the one they were assigned at birth.	p. 10

Luminaries in NYC History



Maya Angelou

Writer, civil rights activist, editor,
playwright, poet laureate and director

Kujegi Camara

Bronx-born defender of West-African
immigrant, Muslim and women's rights



Yuri Kochiyama

Japanese American activist who fought
for racial justice and workers' rights

Lorena Borjas

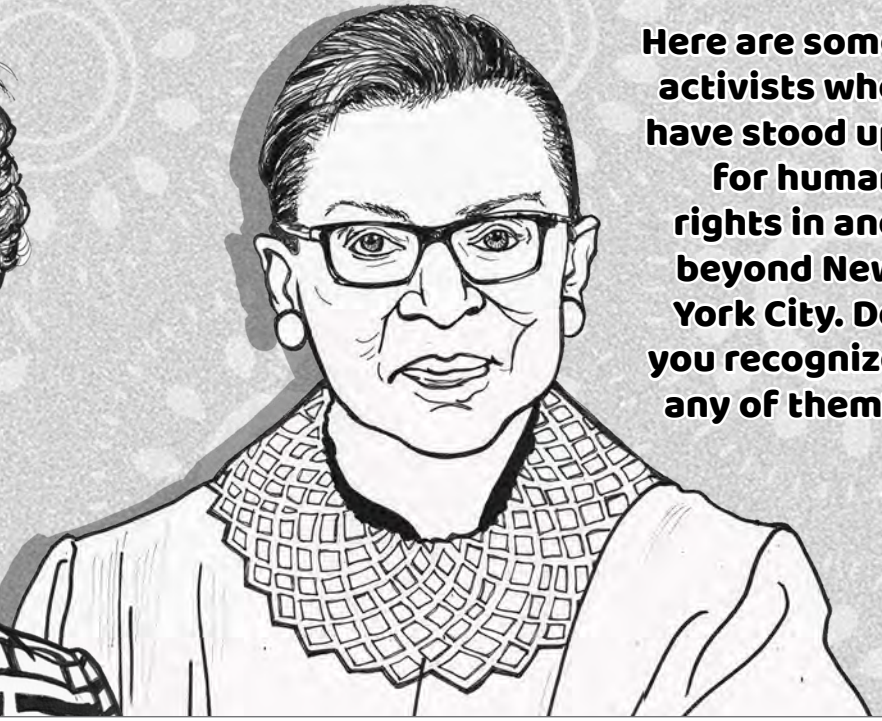
Mexican American transgender and
immigrant rights activist in Queens, NY

Here are some activists who have stood up for human rights in and beyond New York City. Do you recognize any of them?



Shirley Chisholm

First Black woman elected to Congress and to run for president of the United States



Ruth Bader Ginsburg

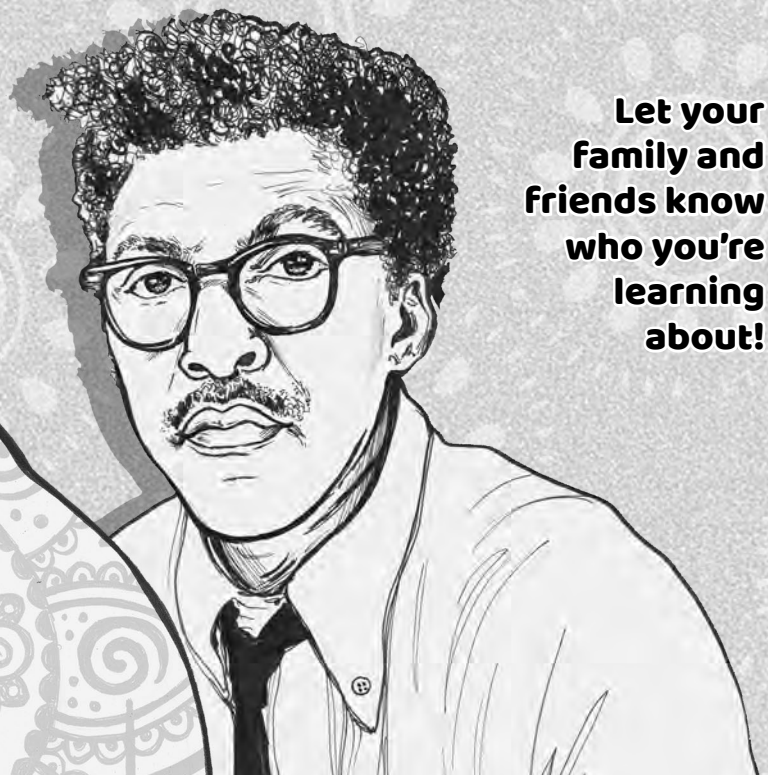
Second woman to serve on Supreme Court, women's rights defender

Let your family and friends know who you're learning about!



Evelina Lopez Antonetty

Puerto Rican activist who helped to improve education for youth in the Bronx



Bayard Rustin

Black leader in movements for civil rights, nonviolence, and gay rights

Luminaries in NYC History



Father Mychal Judge

Irish Catholic priest, chaplain to NYC Fire Department, LGBT and AIDS activist

Clara Lemlich

Jewish immigrant activist from Ukraine who helped to defend workers' rights

Let your family and friends know who you're learning about!



Corky Lee

Chinese American journalist and photographer who uplifted Asian American stories

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay

Indian activist who fought against colonialism, for women and alongside Black New Yorkers

Here are some activists who have stood up for human rights in and beyond New York City. Do you recognize any of them?

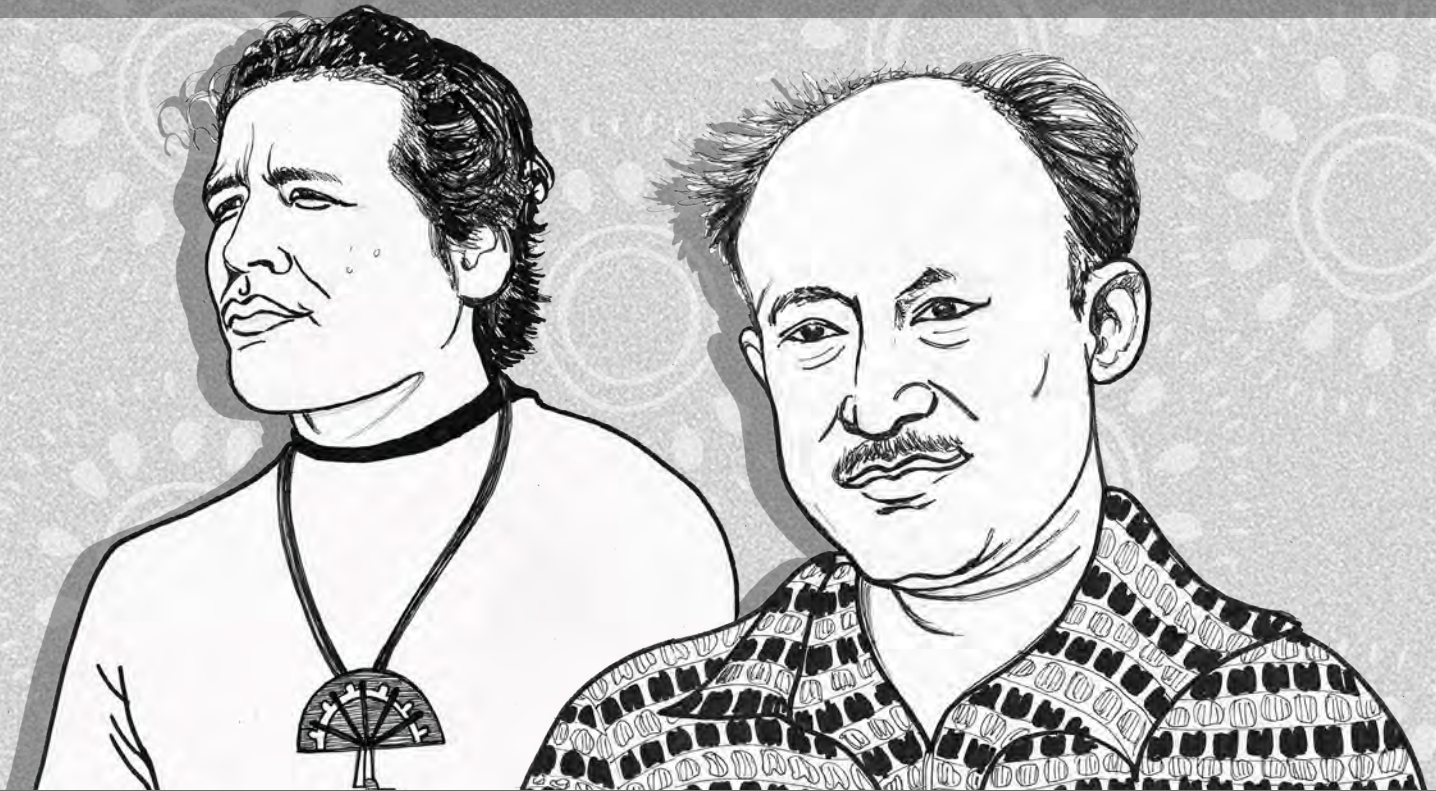


Juan "Jan" Rodriguez

First non-native resident of Manhattan, of Afro-Dominican descent

Edith Prentiss

Advocate for people with disabilities who fought to make NYC accessible for everyone



Richard Oakes

Mohawk activist who fought for Native American rights and helped establish Native American studies in colleges

Khwaja Ahmad Abbas

Indian writer, film producer and activist who supported racial justice advocates in NYC

How to stand up for human rights

You always have the right to be safe. You always have the right to get help, for yourself, or for someone else. Your voice and actions are important. Our communities work best when everyone is taking care of everyone else. Sometimes, when we see someone being treated unfairly, we don't know what to do, so we don't do anything at all. When that happens, people start to think that unfairness is okay, and that's not what we want!

Perhaps the most important thing we can do to create justice in our communities is to practice being respectful and fair ourselves. Here are some things to think about:

- ★ **Think about the words you use.** Are you saying something that might be a stereotype or unfair to a group of people?
- ★ If someone is different from you and you ask them a question, **think about WHY you're asking that question** and if you're doing it in a respectful way. Are you curious? Do you want to help someone? Would you ask someone who's similar to you the same question?
- ★ **Always get consent before you touch someone.** This means asking them with words if it's okay for you to touch them, even if it's part of a game. It's as easy as saying, "Is it cool if I touch you?" or "Would you mind if I hold your hand to show you how to do something?" A really important part of consent is listening to what people say when you ask, and then respecting it, even if it's not what you'd hoped for.
- ★ **Pay attention to people.** If someone says, "Stop," then stop! If someone looks like they're not having fun, stop and check in. You can say, "Hey, are you okay?" or "Do you like this game/ the way that we're playing/ the things we're doing?" If they say, "No" or "Not really," find another way to play or hang out. Sometimes you think you're making a joke and it hurts someone's feelings.

How to stand up for human rights



- ★ If someone is brave enough to tell you that you hurt their feelings or insulted them or their community, **be brave and kind enough to listen.** It can feel hard when someone tells you you did something they don't like, especially if you feel embarrassed because you didn't intend to be mean. It takes a lot of courage to say, "I'm sorry I did that. Thanks for letting me know. I won't do it again," but you can do it!
- ★ **Take some time to think about people who are different from you,** and might need different things. For example, you can use alt text in your social media to describe images, check in with people about the pronouns they like to use, and ask people about themselves, rather than making assumptions.
- ★ **Think about including other people** in your conversations, clubs, or activities. Maybe the person you don't know very well has something in common with you, or you could learn something from them. Notice who you hang out with and who you ignore. Ask yourself why.
- ★ **You can also think about who can help you:** who can help you to be respectful, who can help you if you see someone harming someone else, and who can help you if you've been harmed. Those people might be kids, teachers, community members, folks you know from your religious community, people from your family. You might want to make a list or talk to people you trust about this now, so that you're ready if something comes up.



When we have communities where everyone feels safe, seen, and respected, it's better for all of us!

Standing up for Rights

Helping other people takes practice! You and your friends can practice being upstanders - people who stand up for what's right - instead of bystanders - people who stand by and watch unfair things happen but don't do anything about it. The more you practice, the better you'll get! Here are some things you can do if you see someone being bullied or treated unfairly:

- ★ **If you feel safe, talk to the person who is being unkind, especially if they're a friend of yours.** You can say, "Hey, that's not cool," or "Let's do something else and leave this person alone." If you know them well, you can also talk to them later, and say something like, "Hey, I didn't like it when you said that - I know you're a cool person and I'm surprised you would be mean to someone like that. What's going on?"
- ★ **Talk to the person who's being hurt.** You can say, "Hey, want to come do something with me?" to interrupt what's happening. You can also talk to them later, and say something like "I saw when that happened, and it wasn't okay. Do you want to talk about it?"
- ★ **Get an adult you trust.** If you think it's bigger than a kid-sized problem, you can get an adult to help out.

Special Thanks : The Commission is incredibly grateful to the many people who helped make this project possible. We are thankful to Caryn and Laleña, who have been such wonderful and thoughtful partners. We are immensely appreciative of the many Commission staff members, community partners and colleagues in government - particularly Walei Sabry and Arthur Jacobs at the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities - who shared their expertise with us. And, importantly, we are grateful to all the New Yorkers who work each day in big and small ways to make this a place where we can all live with dignity and respect. You inspire us!

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Draw & Express

★ Use this space for any expressions or drawings that you are inspired to create in response to specific prompts or the book in general.

CCHR Campaigns

You Do It With Your Heart
Black Business Solidarity Initiative

Supports & celebrates Black owned businesses

You Have Rights NYC

Legal Rights for Immigrant and Religious Communities and Communities of Color in NYC

Women's Rights

Ensures that women can live free from mistreatment in their home, at work, or in public

LBTQI Protections

Protects NYC's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex communities

Being Seen in NYC

Asserts New Yorkers' rights to be free of gender-based street harassment and anti-Black racism

I Am Muslim, NYC

Supports and strengthens NYC's Muslim and faith-based communities through events and information about rights

Jewish New Yorkers

Educates about the value and diversity of Jewish people to prevent mistreatment of them, called anti-semitism

While Black, NYC

Affirms the rights of all Black New Yorkers to live their lives free of harassment

I Still Believe In Our City

Celebrates solidarity between Asian and Pacific Islander and Black communities in the fight against racism

Testimonial Video Series

Shares peoples' stories of being successfully protected by the Commission on Human Rights



CCHR Contact: 212-416-0197

www1.nyc.gov/site/cchr/media/campaigns.page

To learn even more about how your human rights are protected in NYC, search "CCHR Youth Initiatives" or go to the following website, where you can also download a printable, accessible version of this book: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/cchr/community/youth-initiatives.page>

What's Inside

The Commission on Human Rights presents this fun and informative activity book for youth about the protections enforced by the Commission, freedoms that all New Yorkers have the right to enjoy. The book highlights the people and celebrations that are closely connected to human rights work in the City of New York, as well as a number of inspiring activists who have shown us what it means to defend human rights in this city.

Imagine, reflect, write, draw, discuss, express and explore what human rights mean to you!



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