



Black History Month is Every Month

By Educator Barnes – January 27, 2020

Saturday is officially the first day of Black History Month. Can I tell you a secret? I have already been celebrating black history. I celebrate from January 1 until December 31. Why? Well, because I'm black every single day. It is important for me to hear positive stories about black people and see positive images of black people no matter the calendar date. Until schools pick up this belief; black history will continue to be a special event in the curriculum instead of being seamlessly integrated into the curriculum.

The art teacher at my school was covering an artist who created multiple panels with images of the great migration of black people from the south to the north. She did not wait until it was Black History Month to incorporate this into her lesson plans. The majority of the students at my school are Hispanic. Not only is it important for black children to see

themselves in the curriculum, but it is also important for children who aren't black to see themselves.

This gravity of why this is important reminds me of a conversation I had with my uncle. Two of my aunts and an uncle went to China for three weeks a couple of years ago. I remember my uncle telling me how fascinated the locals were with him as if he were an oddity. That reminds me of how overly fascinated I have seen children respond to positive stories about black people. Some are shocked because it doesn't align with a narrative they have. I don't want black success or black excellence to be a surprise.

Furthermore, I want there to be fewer stories about the first black person to hold a certain role or position. The only way I see this cycle ending is if black children see that people who look like them can do anything. It should not be 2020, and we are clapping about a black person being the first in an area to accomplish a goal. We should be sad that it took us to get to 2020 for that to be a reality. We should be making sure that black excellence is the rule and not the exception.

That's why I assert that sentiments behind Black History Month extend past the month of February. There are so many unsung heroes that we don't know about. We definitely need more than the shortest month of the year, even with Leap Day, to tell our stories.