

# Celebrating Diversity

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## The Gullah Culture of South Carolina

### Gullah History

The Gullah are known for preserving more of their African linguistic and cultural heritage than any other African-American community in the US. They are the inhabitants of the Lowcountry coastal region of South Carolina. The Gullah people and their language are also called *Geechee*, a word that can have a derogatory connotation depending on the usage. Although the development of resorts on the Sea Islands have threatened to push Gullahs off family lands they have owned since emancipation, they strive to maintain their culture and live simply just as they did more than a hundred years ago.

The original Gullah were African slaves who were shipped across the Atlantic from West Africa to work the cotton plantations of the South. While plantation owners built their fortunes upon slave labor, the slaves were able to create something of their own, the

unique culture that is now known as Gullah. With that culture came a thriving mix of language, folktales and superstition, a mix that has shaped generations of families who live on Hilton Head Island and in the Lowcountry today.

In addition to the annual Hilton Head Island Gullah Celebration held each February, which gives visitors the opportunity to share in rich cultural traditions and crafts, there are many other attractions. While in town, visitors can also visit *Mitchelville* - the first freed Negro township; *Gullah Heritage Trail* - Hilton Head Island; *Ibille Indigo House* - a working studio where visitors learn the tradition of West African indigo dye processes and products; *Zion Chapel of Ease* - Hilton Head's oldest cemetery; *Queen Chapel AME Church* - established in 1860 as a "praise house" for Pope Plantation slaves.

### Gullah Language

The Gullah culture is kept



alive through vivid storytelling in the native tongue of Gullah, a dialect that appears to be a combination of a variety of African languages and English. Forbidden by plantation owners to speak their native tongue, the African slaves developed the dialect out of necessity by incorporating broken English with African words. The Gullah dialect survives today as a "creolized" version of English.

Through passionate prayers, sermons and tales, the Gullah remember their past and look toward the future preservation of their culture; a culture renowned for the crafts of sweet grass basket weaving, boat building and quilting.

*Huddy Everybody! Come jine we on we island home!*



## HIV-AIDS and Mental Health



*The awareness events offered in March provide a source of information for the community and support for those who have HIV-AIDS*

When people are diagnosed with HIV, their physical health is not the only issue they have to deal with. Along with the physical illness are mental health conditions that may come up. *Mental health* refers to the overall well-being of a person, including a person's mood, emotions, and behavior.

HIV/AIDS can have a major impact on many areas of life, including emotional, social, occupational, and spiritual functioning. This is true for the individual with the diagnosis as well as those close to him or her.

Many people are surprised when they learn that they

have contracted HIV. Some people feel overwhelmed by the changes that they will need to make in their lives. It is normal to have strong reactions to such news. Most people report feelings of fear, anger, and being overwhelmed. Often people feel helpless, sad, and anxious about ways the virus will affect their lives.

What follows are some of the most common feelings associated with a diagnosis of HIV and suggestions on how to cope with these feelings. Those with HIV-AIDS experience some, all, or none of these feelings, and they may experience them at different times.

**People who find out that they are HIV positive often deal with the news by first denying that it is true.**

They may believe that the HIV test came out wrong or that there was a mix-up of test results. This is a natural and normal first reaction.

At first, this denial may even be helpful, because it can give the person time to get used to the idea of infection. However, if not dealt with, denial can be dangerous; the infected person may fail to take certain precautions or reach out for the necessary help and medical support.

It is important that the person discuss their feelings with a doctor or someone they trust. This is imperative so that he or she can begin to receive the proper care and support.

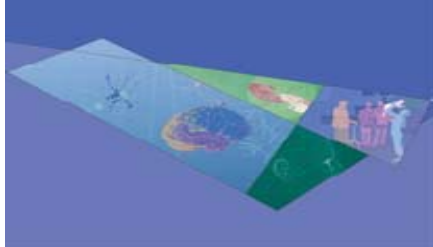
**Anger is another common and natural feeling related to being diagnosed with HIV.** Many people are upset about how they got the virus or angry that they didn't know they had the virus.

**It is also quite normal to feel sad when diagnosed with HIV.** If, over time, the sadness doesn't go away or is getting worse, he or she may need to seek therapy. The individual may have clinical depression. Symptoms of depression can include feelings of sadness, hopelessness, worthlessness, problems with sleep, weight loss or gain, difficulty concentrating and irritability.

**Fear and anxiety may be caused by not knowing what to expect once diagnosed with HIV** or not knowing how others will respond when they find out the person has HIV. He or she may be afraid of telling people--friends, family members, and coworkers--that they are HIV positive. Fear can make the heart beat faster or make it hard to sleep well. Anxiety may also cause nervousness or agitation. Fear and anxiety might make the individual sweat, feel dizzy, or even feel short of breath.

**If you are HIV positive, you and your loved ones constantly have to deal with stress.** Stress is unique and personal to the individual. When stress does occur, it is important to recognize and deal with it.

### NIMH Strategic Research Priorities



NIMH recognizes the inevitable link between HIV-AIDS and mental health. Their Division of AIDS Research (DAR) supports innovative, interdisciplinary *HIV prevention* research designed to better understand individual, dyadic, community, social, and structural factors that impact HIV risk-reduction in order to improve sustained preventive behaviors.



## Staff Spotlight- Bernette Collins

**Date of birth:** April 7, 1961. She will be 50 years old this year and is going to have a big celebration!

**Place of birth:** Aiken County.

**Family of Origin:** Bernie is the oldest of 3 kids. She has a 46 year old brother and a 45 year old sister. Her mother died when she was 10 years old. Bernie lived with her grandmother after her death. Her father is also deceased.

**Later Family Life:** Bernie was married to Charles Roberson for 21 years. They had 4 kids: Carlos (36), Renee (35), Roy (31), and Tilton (26). She now has 7 grandkids. In 1999, Charles was diagnosed with ALS, better known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, and he passed away in 2002. Bernie was heartbroken at this loss and believed she would never fall in love again, until God intervened.

She and Ted Collins married in October 2005 and had Teddy in July 2009. Her oldest son and daughter live in Atlanta, GA and her other kids live in Aiken County. Her oldest grandson is almost 15 yo and two of Bernie's grandchildren were born the same month she gave birth to Teddy!

### In my household:

Bernie lives with Ted and Teddy (19 months old). Ted is the pastor at Bibleway Church of Saluda.

### Hobbies:

Crafts, listening to music (mostly spiritual, gospel, and jazz), and she especially likes quiet time alone! During her quiet time she likes to read inspirational books.

### Talents:

Singing; she is a great encourager to others; she is a people-person and is drawn to people, especially those who tend to be alone. She is good at making people feel like they belong and that everybody is somebody.

### Core values/beliefs:

"I want to live my life as close to Scripture as possible. I am not perfect, but that is what I believe." Bernie describes her life as a "nice, simple life, nothing extravagant."

### Most important life experience:

"Giving my life to the Lord in 1998." She has been active in church since childhood, attending services, singing in the choir and leading the children's choir. But it was only after attending a new church in 1998 that she began to understand the difference in having book knowledge about the Lord and really *knowing* the Lord. "I fell in love with Jesus. It was like the light bulb came on and a brand new life began."

### Most influential person/people in my life:

Her spiritual mother, Apostle Viola Holmes. She is like a mother to Bernie. She taught her that she never has to worry about what others say about her, because she can look in the mirror and see for herself just how beautiful she is. She taught her to search the Scriptures for answers in times of need. Pastor Teresa Spann was another influential person. "She is always truthful with me and would tell me what I needed to hear and I was able to accept that from her." Her husband, Ted Collins, is another influential person. "He was like a brother before we got married." He helped her to understand the Bible and would give her encouragement. "It is amazing how the Lord brought us together, like pieces of a puzzle."

### Goal/Mission in life:

"See all of my kids grow up and be independent. I have seen that with 4 of my kids, now I just hope I get to see that with Teddy. I want to leave an impact on people, not just impress them. I want to be a living Bible so that people can see Jesus living through me. I want Jesus Christ to get the glory out of my life and I want to live to please him."





## African American History Month Challenge: How Much Do You Know?

1. What was the first all-African American religious denomination in the United States?
2. Who invented electronic control devices for guided missiles, IBM computers, and the control unit for a pacemaker?
3. Which skilled neurosurgeon, led the first successful operation to separate a pair of Siamese twin infants who were joined at the back of the head in 1987?
4. Name the author who wrote *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, published in 1970?
5. Who is the three time Super Bowl champion player who returned to his Florida alma mater to receive his bachelor's degree in 1996?
6. Who was the first African-American to be honored on a U.S. postage stamp in 1940?
7. Denzel Washington played in *A Soldier's Story* (1981), Pulitzer Prize-winning play by which writer?
8. Who sang Martin Luther King, Jr.'s favorite gospel song, "Precious Lord, Take My Hand," after his funeral procession in 1968? (*Committee-member, Anne George, taught King's oldest son and attended this funeral service!*)
9. What thoroughbred jockey was the first to win three Derbies & the only jockey to win the Kentucky Derby, the Kentucky Oaks, and the Clark Handicap within the same year?
10. What was the nickname for the all-Black 332d Fighter Group of the U.S. Army Air Corps, which escorted Allied bombers through European airspace on 1,578 missions during World War II?
11. Who held over 60 patents & created the portable air conditioner that was used in WWII to preserve medicine and blood serum?
12. The hymn, "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing," by James Weldon Johnson, was meant to celebrate whose birthday?
13. A pitcher in the Negro Baseball League for 25 years, developer of the bat-badger, jumpball, and drooper, he was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1971--name him.
14. Having worked as an elevator operator for four dollars weekly, he achieved fame upon publication of *Lyrics of Lowly Life* in 1896.
15. Who invented specialized hair products for African-American hair and became the first American woman to become a millionaire?
16. She was the first African American woman admitted into the astronaut training program & flew into space aboard the *Endeavor* in 1992.
17. Which activist founded the first African American national union for sleeping car porters?
18. Which former slave and eminent scientist, at the age of 76, narrated a 1940 documentary dramatizing his struggles and successes to a young boy pondering options for the future?
19. This movie director, composer and author was a photographer for *Life* magazine from 1948-1972.
20. What was the first African American-owned company to be traded on the NY Stock Exchange?



**Answers:** 1)African Methodist Episcopal (AME) 2)Otis Boykin 3)Dr. Ben Carson 4)Alice Walker 5)Emmitt Smith  
6)Booker T. Washington 7)Charles Fuller 8)Mahalia Jackson 9)Isaac Murphy 10)The Tuskegee Airmen  
11)Frederick Jones 12)Abraham Lincoln 13)Satchel Paige 14)Paul Lawrence Dunbar 15)Madame C.J. Walker  
16)Mae Jemison 17)A. Phillip Randolph 18)George Washington Carver 19)Gordon Parks 20)BET Holdings

## Jehovah's Witnesses: Who are they and what do they believe?

Many people don't know a lot about Jehovah's Witnesses besides the fact that they are busy going from door to door talking to people about the Bible. Perhaps you have taken the time to listen to them or maybe not. Jehovah's Witnesses are worldwide in 236 countries. There are over seven million Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide. They rely on the books of the Bible, the Greek and the Hebrew Scriptures, and take them literally except where the expressions or settings obviously indicate that they are figurative or symbolic. They believe that many of the prophecies of the Bible have been fulfilled, others are in the course of fulfillment, and still others await fulfillment.

## Answers to Common Questions

### 1. Are Jehovah's Witnesses Christians?

*Jehovah's Witnesses are Christians.* However, they do not believe as other religions that are Christian because they recognize certain teachings of these religions to be unscriptural. For example, they don't believe the Bible teaches that God, who is the personification of love, tortures people forever in a fiery hell. (Romans 6:23) Jehovah's Witnesses are not a part of a sect which is a dissenting group within a religious community or one that breaks away from a new religion. Jehovah's Witnesses are not a part of a cult, which is a religion said to be unorthodox or that emphasizes devotion according to a ritual. Many cults have a living human leader and often live in groups apart from the rest of society. Jehovah's Witnesses worship is their way of life, not a ritual. They adhere strictly to God's Word the Bible. They live and work with the rest of society.



*The Watchtower is printed in more than 132 languages*

### 2. Do Jehovah's Witnesses believe in Jesus?

Yes, they believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but not a part of a Trinity. That he is a created being. (John 14:28) They also believe that he gave his perfect human life on behalf of mankind, which makes it possible for salvation for everlasting life for those exercising faith in his ransom. (John 3:16)

### 3. Why do Jehovah's Witnesses preach from door to door?

Jehovah's Witnesses preach from door to door because of the verses in the book of Matthew to "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all nations... And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations and then the end will come."

### 4. Why don't Jehovah's Witnesses Celebrate Holidays?

Jehovah's Witnesses do not celebrate holidays because they do not originate from Bible based teaching. They believe they have a pagan origin. (Ephesians 5:10, 11)

### 5. Why don't Jehovah's Witnesses get involved in politics?

Jehovah's Witnesses take a neutral stand when it comes to political affairs. They look to God's Kingdom as the only solution to mankind's problems. But Jehovah's Witnesses are respectful, law-abiding citizens. (Acts 5:28, 29 and Rom.13:15-7)



*Seen here, the name Jehovah, or Yahweh, appears almost 7,000 times in the original Hebrew Scriptures.*

## Personal Account of the Decision to Become a Witness –LaTosha Adams

"While my parents are Jehovah's Witnesses that is not the reason I chose to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses. As I grew older I wanted to know for myself that what I was learning is indeed from God's Word, the Bible. As I did research to find answers to the many questions had, my love and appreciation...in Jehovah deepened. Another reason why I decided to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses is I saw the benefits of following Jehovah's standards based on his word the Bible. I am able to have a life that is happy and satisfying because of pleasing Jehovah God no matter what obstacles I may go through. One thing I love about my faith is the love that is shown at the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses. You can be a complete stranger, different race, culture, and everyone will treat you like family with an overabundance of love. I can say from my heart that I am proud to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses."

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### HIV-AIDS and Mental Health. Continued

As the individual gains more understanding about how stress affects them, they will come up with their own ways for coping with stress.

HIV/AIDS and some medications for treating HIV may affect the brain. When HIV itself infects the brain, it can cause a condition known as *AIDS Dementia Complex (ADC)*.

Symptoms can include forgetfulness, confusion, difficulty paying attention, slurred speech, muscle weakness, sudden shifts in moods or behavior and clumsiness.

People deal with the diagnosis of HIV in various ways. Doctors and social workers recommend talking about feelings with a doctor,

friends, family members, or other supporters. It is also helpful to find activities that relieve stress, such as exercise or hobbies. Getting proper sleep each night is also important. Some people learn relaxation methods like meditation, yoga, or deep breathing. Support groups are also an excellent source of help.

## Low Country Red Rice- South Carolina

### Ingredients:

- 1 small yellow onion
- 3 thick slices bacon
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1 cup long-grain white rice
- 1 can (14 ounces) crushed tomatoes
- Salt, ground black pepper, and cayenne pepper to taste



Directions: Chop the onion. Have the can of tomatoes opened and ready to use. In a heavy saucepan over medium-high heat, fry the bacon until crisp and the fat is rendered, 3 to 5 minutes. Transfer to paper towels to drain. Pour off all but 2 tablespoons of the bacon fat from the pan. Return the pan to medium heat and add the onion. Sauté until it begins to soften, about 2 minutes. Add the rice and sauté until the grains are coated with the bacon fat and are very hot, about 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes, salt, and black and cayenne peppers, mixing well. Pour in the stock or water and bring to a boil. Cover tightly, reduce heat to low, and cook until the rice is tender and the liquid is absorbed, about 30 minutes. Do not stir the rice during this time. Spoon the rice into a serving bowl and crumble the bacon over the top. Serve at once. Serves 4-6

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