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CHANGEMAKER SPOTLIGHT

Get to know Daniel Mango, social worker, educator and San Francisco Bay Area Program Director at IMHA



Photo by KEHN HERMANO from Pexels

An interview with Daniel

This past week, we had the opportunity to interview Daniel Mango. Daniel is an integral part of our team here at IMHA, serving as our San Francisco Bay Area Program Director. Daniel is an experienced clinician, educator, advocate, creator and so much more. He has launched a Black History Month project which comes in the form of an empowering one of a kind newsletter. We covered a variety of topics, including how to engage in Black History Month respectfully, the important roles communities play in mental health, and how to start your healing journey.



OVERVIEW

- Introducing The Black History Month Newsletter
- Courageous Youth in the Civil Rights Movement
- Representing diversity through Education

"People often think of African Americans as this monolith, this one big group of people. I did want to break those stereotypes [with this newsletter]. That's why I led with Marsha on the front, because she is a transgender person who did so much..and a lot of times their stories get erased."

-Daniel Mango

The Interview

By Riyan Visram

with Daniel Mango

Q: What keeps your fire burning?

A: My love for racial and social justice, all the help I can bring to a person's life and all the things I can support people with. That's what keeps me going, getting to see those clients and smiling and laughing with them, knowing that they are improving their life. Also, people who've been historically marginalized, being able to give them a voice and uplift them. Those are the things that drive me and give me extra strength.

Q: What does Black History Month mean to you?

A: It means a lot of things. I feel like Black History Month gives us a time to honor Black people and their accomplishments, that it's not about those inferiority ideas that have been passed down to us through white supremacy and all these laws. Black people do so much and are so accomplished. I wish it was longer than a month, but it is a good start. It means a lot to me, so when every February comes by it gives me that chance and that's why I'm so big on it. It gives me a chance to reflect on my life and what Blackness means to me and what it means to be an African American especially in this time.

Q: Would you like to introduce something from your newsletter?

A: When everyone thinks of Montgomery Bus Boycott, they think of Rosa Parks. However, there were women before Rosa Parks who stood up. When I went to the civil rights museum in Atlanta, and I saw a piece of Claudette, I thought it was amazing how much courage a 15 year old had in what she believed in. I also put that in there because the students who will read the newsletter can feel empowered. This [notion] that teens don't have expertise.. I really don't buy into that as I believe everyone has something to offer. After I had published this I found out that there was someone even before Claudette, and at the end of the newsletter you'll see Irene get a shoutout in the "Did You Know" section.



Q: How does someone begin their healing journey?

A: Everyone needs self-care, mental health care, it doesn't matter who you are. I believe if people want to begin that journey it involves connecting to people in your home and in your life. The next step is reaching out. Find someone that you can connect with and educate yourself. There's so many sites that talk about mental health and taking care of yourself. There's not really one way, there is a multitude of ways and approaches, but I really really believe in starting where you're at and taking stock of what's around you. That's why I love the barbershop so much because self-care practices are happening there, it's not "official", but that's where they can talk and build community and talk about their problems and other real things.



Q: What are your tips for someone who wants to engage in Black History Month respectfully?

A: The top thing is supporting Black Folk, Black Businesses, Black Artists, and their local stores in any way during this time. The other thing I'd say is to check out films, books, art exhibitions, things that you haven't done before and start getting curious about it. And that's why in the newsletter I added in cool Black Businesses to check out, events that are going on, these are ways that you can actively engage and meet new people , make new friends and learn new things.

Speaking of the newsletter, please check it out on IMHA's website!

Reading this newsletter is a great step in engaging in Black History Month which celebrates the diversity of various Black positionalities by giving a voice and ensuring our stories are heard.

Passionate about Black mental health?

Reach out to Daniel at team@imha.ngo to get involved.

