

UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS MONTH**Topic At A Glance**

December is Universal Human Rights Month. It is a reminder that the United Nations General Assembly codified the basic human rights of every person. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been translated into more than 500 languages- more than any other documents in the world. During this month, light is shed on the advancement of equality and dignity for all as the foundation of freedom, peace, and justice. In addition, it is also a reminder of the efforts towards the goal to continue to fight for the freedom and equality of all people. December 10, 2023 marks the 75th anniversary of the declaration and world leaders and activist are looking at the declaration more than ever due to ongoing global events such as the genocide in Palestine, Sudan, Congo, Myanmar, global warming, and a leading problem in the United States- gun violence. Universal Human Rights is not limited to only December, but rather a time to remind others and reflect on the fight for humans to simply exist as humans and push forward into the new year for the hopes of becoming closer to the goal.

**Topic's History**

In 1948 after the turmoil of World War II, the Commission of Human Rights, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, wrote a document called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United Nations adopted this document and defines human rights on a universal level. It states "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms outlined in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made based on the political, jurisdictional, or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing, or under any other limitation of sovereignty. Then the document continues to provide twenty-eight additional articles addressing human rights and emphasizes the importance of protecting people's freedoms. It sets a common standard of achievements for all people and nations.

While we hope that human rights are recognized every day of the year, let the Universal Month for Human Rights be yet another reason to embrace the people around you this December. Take the time to find similarities amongst those near you, learn about another culture, make a new friend with a different background, and keep an open mind. Always remember to treat others kindly, with respect and equality, because, at the end of the day, we are all human.

Current News**US supreme court refuses to overturn Illinois assault weapons ban**

On December 14th, the US Supreme Court upheld the ban on assault weapons such as AR-15's and AK-47's in the state of Illinois. This law was set in place after the deadly mass shooting in Highland Park, Illinois on July 4th, 2022. The shooter, a 21-year-old male, killed 7 people at an independence parade with a semi-automatic assault rifle. The law completely prevented the sale of all assault rifles in the state including the one used in the deadly shooting. Recently, a firearms retailer and the NRA (National Rifle Association) challenged this ruling claiming it was unconstitutional. The ruling upheld the law in the Illinois Supreme Court in August and was taken to the Supreme Court. Fortunately, the law was very recently upheld by the Supreme Court and the sale of deadly assault rifles will continue to be banned. Illinois joins a list of at least 7 other states in banning the sale of assault rifles and hopefully, this trend will continue for the years to come. The seven deaths at Highland Park and the thousands more before them are constant reminders of what happens when we let the uncontrolled sale of deadly weapons occur with little regulation. The time to take action against the uptick in violence from assault weapons is now and the banning of their sale is the first step in solving gun violence.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND SOCIALS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT US

@MFOLIOWA | WWW.MARCHFOROURLIVESIA.ORG/

UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS MONTH

**Topic's Relation to Gun Control**

Major conflicts involving human rights have often resulted in violence and even war. Some have been within the history of our country. An example of this would be the American Civil War. The American Civil War was fought between the United States of America and the Confederate States of America, a collection of eleven southern states that left the Union in 1860 and 1861. The conflict began primarily as a result of the long-standing disagreement over the institution of slavery and the human rights of African Americans.

Unfortunately, there is still conflict over human rights present in our world. An example of this would be the multiple conflicts going on in the Middle East. 2023 was a tumultuous and tragic year for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). This year saw the outbreak of wars in Sudan and between Israel and the Gaza Strip, devastating natural disasters in Morocco, Libya, Syria, and Turkey, and a crackdown on protestors and women in Iran. 2023 also produced moments of hope and diplomatic feats. MENA countries were included in development organizations and plans that aimed to bolster the region's economic prosperity; Iran and Saudi Arabia restored diplomatic relations; and the Abraham Accords continued to prosper. Our hearts go out to the many lives that were lost.

Josh Gatbunton's Story

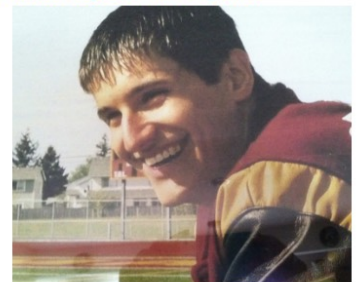
"I will never forget that 4:00 AM phone call in September 2008—on what was the first day of school—telling me my son had been shot. I will never forget arriving at the hospital, the same hospital where my beautiful boy was born 20 years before, and finding out that a bullet killed my son."

In this article by **Alliance for Gun Responsibility**, the mother of Josh Gatbunton, Kim Gatbunton, recounts her fond memories of Josh and the lasting impact this death has had on her. Josh was attending St Martin's University in Lacey, Washington on an academic and athletic scholarship. A gifted runner, Joshua's name can still be found on the track record board nearly 11 years after his death.

One evening in September 2008, Josh was staying over at a friend's apartment when he answered a knock at the door. During an attempted robbery, gunmen shot Joshua while forcing entry into his friend's apartment. His friend was also shot but survived after surgery. Joshua was pronounced dead upon arrival at the hospital several hours after the horrific shooting.

Even though it's been nearly 11 years, Kim is determined to share her son's story because it has still left a painful impact on her life. In her own words, "People have no idea what families endure in the aftermath of a gun death—the court process, trials, and sentencing...Things I would do or say with my son are gone forever to bullets."

Kim now speaks out against gun violence and advocates for safer communities to help families because we all deserve to live in a world free from gun violence.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND SOCIALS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT US

@MFOLIOWA | WWW.MARCHFOROURLIVESIA.ORG/