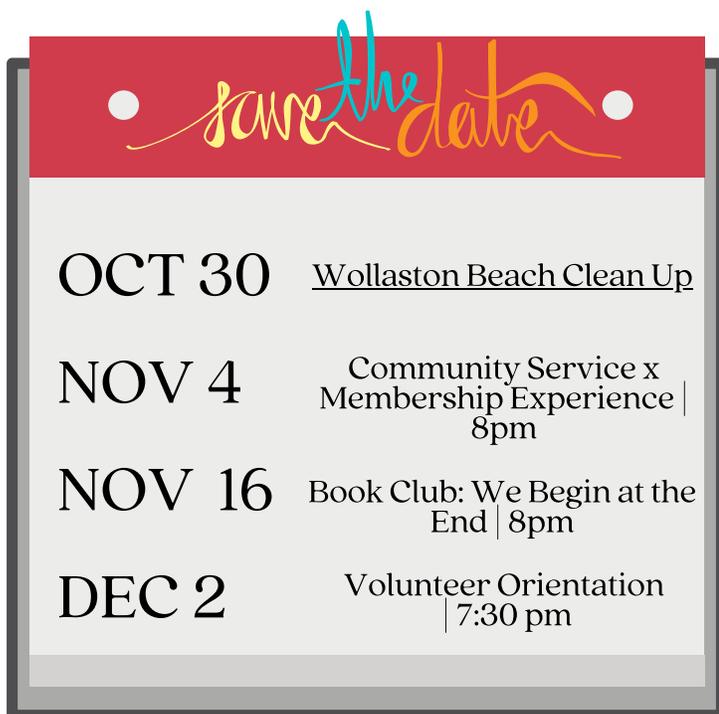


# Internal NEWSLETTER

October 2021



For any additional events, visit our event page [here](#)

## Important Update

We have a new Instagram page!  
Check us out @naaap\_boston

## Volunteer Spotlight

As a active volunteer of the HR Committee at NAAAP Boston, Priscilla Zhang is also a undergraduate student at Northeastern University, majoring in Finance and Political Science.

Priscilla recently accepted her first co-op at Boston Consulting Group's Risk Management Global Operations Team, starting in January 2022.

**Congratulations Priscilla!**



# *Internal* NEWSLETTER

## October 2021

### Diwali



**Diwali**, known to many as the Festival of Lights, typically falls in October or November. Since Diwali follows the lunar Hindu calendar, Western calendar dates will shift each year. In 2021, Diwali falls on November 4th.

Diwali, a New Year festival, is one of the most popular holidays in South Asia and is celebrated by Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and some Buddhists. “Diwali” is also sometimes called “Deepavali,” especially in Southern India, and “Tihar” in Nepal. “Deepavali” means “rows of lighted lamps,” which refers to the oil (and electric) lamps called diyas, which are often used to decorate houses, shops and public places. In India, diyas are floated across the river Ganges. In general, these lamps symbolize the victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance. Diwali’s significance varies across these different religious traditions, and the festival is celebrated in a range of ways.

**To read more about Diwali, see the Appendix.**



# Internal NEWSLETTER

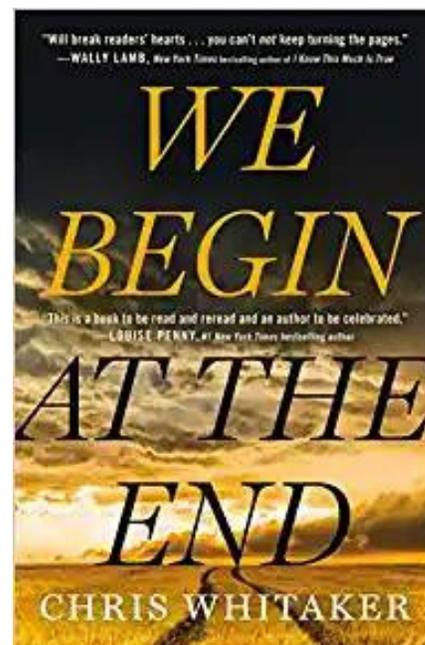
October 2021

## Next Book Club: We Begin at the End

Our next book club will occur on Tuesday, November 16th at 8PM. We will be reading *We Begin at the End* by Chris Whitaker. If interested, please reach out to [hr@naaapboston.org](mailto:hr@naaapboston.org).

*“A vibrant, engrossing, unputdownable thriller that packs a serious emotional punch. One of those rare books that surprise you along the way and then linger in your mind long after you have finished it.”*

—Kristin Hannah, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *The Nightingale* and *The Four Winds*



## WOLLASTON BEACH CLEANUP DAY

Come take a walk on the beach!

NAAAP Boston will be participating in the Wollaston Beach Cleanup event as part of our Environmental Impact Initiative. Come join us help this cleanup effort and meet fellow members of the NAAAP Boston community!

OCT  
30

DATE: October 30, 2021  
TIME: 10:00AM - 1:00PM  
ADDRESS: Wollaston Beach, Quincy, MA

Snacks, trash bags, and pickup tools will be provided. Wear appropriate footwear as the beach can be rocky.

To register, visit:  
<https://boston.naaap.org/events/wollaston-beach-cleanup-day>

## Wollaston Beach Cleanup Day

Come take a walk on the beach with NAAAP Boston! We will be joining the Wollaston Beach Cleanup event as part of our Environmental Impact Initiative. Come help us help the cleanup efforts and meet fellow members of the NAAAP Boston community!

Snacks, trash bags, and pickup tools will be provided! The beach can be rocky at times, so wear appropriate footwear!

Interested? Sign up [here!](https://boston.naaap.org/events/wollaston-beach-cleanup-day)

# *Internal* NEWSLETTER

October 2021

## **Next Social Outing: Sushi Burrito Edition**

Calling all enthusiasts of sushi burritos! If you have an appreciation of delicious sushi coupled with the handy dandy portability of a burrito, you're in for a treat. Join us on a part-leisurely walk, part-picnic to enjoy some tasty on-the-go seafood.



### **Here are the details:**

- RSVP here: [Meetup](#)
- Sunday, November 7th, 12-2pm (whenever you feel like bouncing is cool).
- We can order our food on the spot to go, but if you're feeling proactive, you can order online: <https://www.toasttab.com/sushi-kappo/v3#!/#>
- We suggest that you bring a picnic blanket just in case (also a sweater!).
- Get a sushi burrito (but you're welcome to get whatever you want from their menu), head to the [Back Bay Fens](#) and walk around or plop down!



**Thank you for reading! See you next month!**

Submit content for our November 2021 Internal Newsletter [here](#)

# Internal NEWSLETTER

October 2021

Appendix



Workplace

Fact Sheet

## Diwali

Diwali, known to many as the Festival of Lights, typically falls in October or November. Since Diwali follows the lunar Hindu calendar, Western calendar dates will shift each year. In 2021, Diwali falls on November 4th.

Diwali, a New Year festival, is one of the most popular holidays in South Asia and is celebrated by Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and some Buddhists. “Diwali” is also sometimes called “Deepavali,” especially in Southern India, and “Tihar” in Nepal. “Deepavali” means “rows of lighted lamps,” which refers to the oil (and electric) lamps called diyas, which are often used to decorate houses, shops and public places. In India, diyas are floated across the river Ganges. In general, these lamps symbolize the victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance. Diwali’s significance varies across these different religious traditions, and the festival is celebrated in a range of ways.

### Hinduism

For many Hindus, Diwali honors Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. Lamps are lit to help guide the goddess Lakshmi into people’s homes and businesses. Many Hindus will start the new business year at Diwali and will pray to the goddess Lakshmi for a financially successful year. It is also common for Hindus to build a small altar to Lakshmi and decorate this altar with photos signifying the rewards of wealth. In some parts of India, Hindus celebrate the return of Rama (an incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu) to the city of Ayodhya after the fourteen years of exile, following the defeat of Ravana, the demon king. In the Bengali and Oriya areas of India, the goddess Kali is celebrated at Diwali. And in Nepal, Hindus commemorate the victory of Lord Krishna over the demon king Narakaasura. Even within Hinduism, the meaning and significance of the festival is very diverse.

### Sikhism

Sikhs celebrate another festival that falls around the same time as Diwali, called Bandi Chhor Diwas. In 2021, Bandi Chhor Diwas will take place on November 4th. This day marks the time when the 6th Guru,

Guru Hargobind was released from prison, along with 52 Hindu princes in 1619. At that time, Sikhs celebrated the return of Guru Hargobind by lighting up the Harmandir Sahib (also known as the Golden Temple), a prominent Sikh gurdwara (a Sikh place of worship), located in India. This tradition of lighting lamps and candles to celebrate this day in Sikh history continues today.

### Jainism

For many Jains, Diwali celebrates the day in which Mahavira (the Indian sage who established the central tenets of Jainism), gave his last teachings and attained ultimate liberation. Some very religious Jains will fast for two or three days of Diwali.

# *Internal* NEWSLETTER

October 2021

## Appendix

### **Newar Buddhists**

For some Buddhists, particularly Newar Buddhists (Buddhism practiced by the Newari ethnic group from Nepal's Kathmandu Valley), Diwali commemorates the day in which Emperor Ashoka (an Indian Emperor of the Maurya Dynasty) converted to Buddhism. Buddhists also know the festival as Ashok Vijayadashami. Some Buddhist temples and monasteries are well decorated during this time.

### **How Will Diwali Affect the Global Workplace?**

Diwali is an official holiday in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Mauritius, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname, Malaysia, Singapore, and Fiji. In these countries, government offices, post offices and banks are typically closed at Diwali. Privately owned stores and other businesses may be closed or have shorter work days as well, to allow employees the opportunity to participate in the festivities. In countries where Diwali is not an official holiday, individual businesses may close early to allow employees to celebrate. To eliminate scheduling complications, ensure that all employees are aware of office locations that plan to close or modify their work hours at Diwali.

Though it is not forbidden to participate in or attend work at Diwali, individuals may request time off to spend with family and friends. Be proactive and encourage employees to bring time-off and scheduling requests to managers or HR as soon as possible. Flexible personal day policies make it easier for employees to observe their personal holy days. If possible, companies may wish to allow for "holiday swapping," in which an employee can offer to work on a day like Christmas and take time off on a preferred holy day like the first day of Diwali, for instance.

Given the breadth of ways individuals may recognize or celebrate Diwali, always remember to keep an open mind, and to check in with employees about their specific needs. Employees may request time off, extra breaks to pray, or a modified schedule if they choose to fast (to allow time to break the fast, or a request to reschedule a lunch meeting, for instance).

### **Acknowledging Diwali**

More often we are seeing examples of corporate companies providing educational resources while acknowledging a range of diverse holidays, holy days and religious festivals. Tanenbaum commends many of those who have reached out to their diverse employee and customer bases with these acknowledgements. We believe that holidays present an excellent opportunity for employers to support their religiously diverse employees and customers and reinforce their reputation as leaders in Diversity and Inclusion.

If your company is looking to acknowledge the millions of individuals world-wide celebrating Diwali, be sure the acknowledgement is respectful, that the information it contains is accurate, and that other religious groups are treated with the same inclusive attitude and respect year-round.

### **Avoiding Stereotypes**

Although Diwali is widely celebrated by many in South Asia and across the globe, note that Christian South Asians, a significant minority population in South Asia, do not typically acknowledge Diwali.

### **Common Practices and Celebrations**

In addition to the lighting of lamps, fireworks are a large part of the Diwali celebration across traditions. For many, Diwali is a time for cleaning and redecorating the home, wearing new clothes, and eating large

# *Internal* NEWSLETTER

October 2021

## Appendix

feasts with family and friends. To add to the celebrations, cities and towns in India will often hold street processions and fairs.

Diwali can also be a time for buying and exchanging gifts. Traditionally, sweets and dried fruits were exchanged, but today the festival has become a time for shopping. Local business owners in India commonly expect sales to rise significantly in the weeks before the festival.

### Greetings

If you would like to recognize the festival with your colleagues and friends, it is appropriate to greet them with a simple “Happy Diwali.” If appropriate, you can also greet your Hindu colleagues in Hindi, with “Nya Saal Mubarak,” which literally means Happy New Year.

For more useful information on world religions, subscribe to Tanenbaum’s online resource, **Religion at Work: A (Human) Resource**. Visit the Tanenbaum **Workplace Resources** page for additional Tanenbaum fact sheets and contact Tanenbaum at [workplacediversity@tanenbaum.org](mailto:workplacediversity@tanenbaum.org) with questions.