LGBTQ+ History Month

February 2021

This week in form time we are going to be learning about the contributions of key LBGTQ figures to the subjects you study in school.

Today, we will be learning about people from Geography, English and History.

ENGLISH

Jackie Kay

(1961-)

Photo: Denise Else

Scottish-Nigerian poet, playwright and novelist

Winner of Guardian Fiction Prize and many other awards

Appointed Scottish Makar (national poet) in 2016

Lesbian

Ms Daglish also nominated Jackie Kay

I would like to nominate Jackie Kay. Kay is mixed race, working class and gay.

I enjoy her writing that draws sometimes on one of these strands, sometimes two, sometimes all three and sometimes none of them at all.

She always come across as a very funny, warm, caring and thoughtful human being first and a gifted poet a second or two afterwards.

Kay's well-known poem 'Brendon Gallacher', about a child with an imaginary friend, is a particular favourite.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXJGwsmmEaQ

Ms Minnett has nominated Oscar Wilde

My chosen LGBTQ+ hero is the wonderful Oscar Wilde. His work is both hilarious and poignant whilst also providing his audiences new and old with timeless social commentary.

Most notable works include, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Importance of Being Earnest.* As a playwright and celebrate wit, he had the profound skill of criticising his hypocritical upper class audiences through satirical comedy. As a gay man he was persecuted and jailed where he defended 'the love that dare not speak its name.'

Over 100 years after his death, Wilde continues to be celebrated today particularly with his inspiring epigrams (or quotes) such as, 'be yourself; everyone else is already taken.

Ms Watikns has nominated Carol Ann Duffy

I would like to nominate the poet Carol Ann Duffy.
I am a huge fan of her emotive and entertaining writing. Her love poetry is both witty and sensitive and I really admire the way she continues to break down barriers about gender and sexuality.

HISTORY

Edward Carpenter

(1844-1929)

English poet, philosopher, socialist and gay activist

Emphasised and wrote about long history of gay relationships to promote acceptance

Campaigned for better conditions in industrial Sheffield

Gay man

Ms Jecynk has nominated LGSM- Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners

LGSM was an activist group that supported mining communities during the 1984-1985 miners' strike. They held events to raise money to support families who had no income because of the strike and to generate support for the miners' cause. LGSM's efforts were an immense show of solidarity, but also created links between miners' organisations and the LGBTQIA community that would help advance the cause of LGBTQIA rights and acceptance.

I admire them for their guts and solidarity. LGSM recognised commonalities between themselves and the miners' and took direct action to support others. When large sections of the population held homophobic views, this was particularly brave. The actions of LGSM show when you reach out to others in a common cause, prejudice can be broken down.

GEOGRAPHY

László Almásy

(1895-1951)

Hungarian explorer and aviator

Explored North African desert, discovering and cataloguing prehistoric rock art and re-establishing European contact with Magyarab tribe

Gay man

Ms Howe-Browne has nominated Jayanthi Kuru-Utumpala

Jayanthi Kuru-Utumpala is an LGBTQ+ and Women's Rights activist, and was the first Sri Lankan to reach the summit of Everest, on 21st May 2016.
She climbed most the of the way with her friend Johann Peries, another Sri Lankan LGBTQ+ activist, but he was unable to reach the top due to oxygen failures, so she became the first Sri Lankan to get there!
I admire her for her ability to overcome prejudice and for advocating so strongly for women's rights, as well as LGBTQ+ rights. She gives inspiring and motivational speeches around the world, and has been recognised by the Sri Lankan government as a goodwill ambassador.
Jayanthi regularly gets asked 'What is like to be the first Sri Lankan *woman* to reach the summit of Everest?', and she corrects them, by saying 'first Sri Lankan.' I like her guts and sass!