



October 6, 2022

Reflections on the 53rd Annual African American Day Parade

Happy Thursday, Mount Sinai Community –

Last month, we wrote about how the Mount Sinai Health System would be sponsoring the 53rd Annual [African American Day Parade](#), the nation's largest celebration of African American culture, heritage, and unity, which recognizes the major Black artistic, political, and cultural revival of the [Harlem Renaissance](#).

Pamela Abner, MPA, CPXP, Vice President and Chief Diversity Operations Officer for Mount Sinai Hospitals Group, and **Gary C. Butts**, MD, Executive Vice President and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer for the Mount Sinai Health System and Dean for Diversity Programs, Policy, and Community Affairs at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, had the honor of serving as the parade's Grand Marshals, representing our Health System at the front of the parade. Hospital leadership, including **Evan Flatow**, MD, President of Mount Sinai West, **Scott Lorin**, MD, MBA, President of Mount Sinai Brooklyn, **James C. Tsai**, MD, MBA, President of New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai, **Cameron R. Hernandez**, MD, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of Mount Sinai Queens, and community leader **Rev. Thomas Johnson, Sr.**, DMin, Pastor of Canaan Baptist Church of Christ also joined the celebration aboard the Mount Sinai parade float.



[Click here](#) to see a short video of the parade in action.

This week, we wanted to share reflections and photos from colleagues who participated in this amazing event.

Celeste Valentine, Facilities Coordinator for the Facilities Management/Engineering Department and member of the [Black Leaders Advocating for Change and Community \(BLACC\)](#) Employee Resource Group, shared the personal connection she had to this celebration, both as an African American and a member of the Health System. “I felt a call-to-action to give thanks to my community and to show that Good Health is Essential. My parents both died of cancer very suddenly, and their respective passing moved me to enter the health care field.”



She also explained that she is now a passionate advocate of preventative health and saw the parade as an opportunity to spread that message to others: “During the parade, I saw the faces of our community smiling and waving at our float, and I felt my ancestors’ spirit, especially my parents, applauding and hearing their words saying ‘job well-done’ and ‘Good Health is Essential.’”

Jacobie Ricard, Senior Director for Planning Design and Construction at Mount Sinai Morningside, also joined the procession as a representative of the Mount Sinai Health System’s [GOALS initiative](#), which encourages and empowers Black male employees within the Mount Sinai Health System through connections and networking.

“Though my role is not patient-facing, I am keenly aware of the care provided at the Morningside campus for some of the city’s most vulnerable populations,” he said. “This event was my chance to interact with the people we serve, and it was an amazing feeling. As we proceeded, we repeatedly heard cheers of recognition from the crowd. I was lost for words as I didn’t expect this type of reception. To my colleagues in the Health System, this is a testament to what you do!”



We also want to recognize **Anthony Smalls**, Research and Infrastructure Program Manager at The Mount Sinai Hospital and Icahn Mount Sinai, who joined us with his team to DJ on the Mount Sinai float—bringing joy and energy to the crowd throughout the parade route.

Moments like this are a great reminder about **why** our efforts to embrace anti-racism and equity matter—because they go far beyond the walls of our Health System and are felt directly in the communities we serve.

You can read more about the parade and see more photos on the [Mount Sinai Today article](#).

If you were able to join us on the parade route or are just starting to get involved, we invite you to join one of our events listed below.

All the best,

Angela and Shawn

Join Us for an Upcoming Event

Get Fit While You Sit with Cas: Stop stressing and do some stretching. Increase your range of motion, balance, and coordination. Join Castulo Castro (Cas) on **Thursday, October 6, from 5 – 6 pm** in this health and wellness activity where we'll connect the mind, body, and spirit through a series of easy-going exercises accompanied by mindful breathing and meditation that will leave you in a state of well-being. Remember, our greatest wealth is our health. If you don't use it, you lose it. Register [here](#).

Conversations with Leaders Frank and Maggie Pabon: Join Frank and Maggie Pabon on **Wednesday, October 12 from noon – 1 pm** as they discuss and celebrate Latinx Love with a focus on work/life balance. We hope to see you there! Register [here](#).

Chats for Change: The LANDBACK Movement – Indigenous Rights in Modern Day America: Join facilitators Ashley Michelle Fowler, Med, and Michele Gourley, MD, on **October 11 from 12-1 pm** for a conversation on the history of Native peoples in the United States, the modern day LANDBACK movement, and the work toward collective liberation for all. Register on [Zoom](#).

Best Practices to Enhance the Patient Experience of Neuro-diverse Adults and Children: The Office for Diversity and Inclusion is hosting a series of virtual talks designed to educate and connect employees, faculty, and staff to organizations and resources that support people with disabilities. On **October 11, 2022, from 1 - 2 pm**, join facilitators for a discussion on best practices to enhance the patient experience of neuro-diverse adults and children. Register [here](#).

Visit Mount Sinai Daily on Firststep for more [Hispanic Heritage events](#) and [Disability Awareness events](#). You may need to login with your Mount Sinai email and password.

[Road Map for Action](#)

[Past Bulletins](#)