

Program Ideas and Tips



“What marvelous laboratories plants are. You can’t imagine the joy it’s given me to work with the natural laboratories over the years.”

—Percy Julian



General Tips

- Contact the outreach coordinator at your local PBS affiliate to help plan and promote your events.
- Offer materials on your library Web site. Link to online downloadable versions of the handouts included in this kit. Augment these resources with a calendar of events and programs or related books.
- Create and distribute posters and fliers announcing your event or program.
- Send event information to media outlets, such as newspapers, science center and club newsletters, and local radio and television stations. Supply the information to community, city, and school Web sites in your area.

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

ADULTS

- **Invite a guest speaker to deliver a lecture or slide show.** Topics to consider include Percy Julian’s life and work; breakthroughs in chemistry and the resulting impact on society; contributions of scientists of color and/or female scientists; discrimination in education, housing, sports, science, or other arenas and the ways in which activists have challenged such bigotry; and life during the Jim Crow era in the South, the North, and in your community. Contact a local university for presenters. Distribute copies of the “Who Was Percy Julian?” handout, if applicable.
- **Show videos about famous scientists and/or civil rights leaders.** After each, have a facilitator lead a follow-up discussion to explore the person’s life and work, the impact of the scientific innovations, or ongoing challenges to achieving full equality.

YOUNG ADULTS

- **Hold a science essay contest.** Invite young adults to submit essays of up to 500 words on “How have scientific advances improved your life?” Work with a local science teacher to develop judging criteria. Award prizes and see if your local newspapers will publish the winning entry. Display the essays in the library.
- **Sponsor a “What Do Chemists Do?” program.** Ask a local teacher to bring in chemistry equipment (vials, beakers, burners, etc.) for display. Talk about scientific method and related books and resources in the library. Do the “Changing States” science activity provided in this kit. Make it a multi-week program: add the “Seeing Is Believing” activity and science activities in this kit or from the resources in the Bibliography.
- **Host a Jeopardy-style game.** Work with representatives from a local university’s chemistry and history departments to create questions highlighting scientific advances made by Percy Julian, scientists from other fields, and civil rights activists. Award small prizes.

CHILDREN

- **Organize a storytime, video presentation, or Family Science Fun Night.** Present an age-appropriate book or video about a famous scientist or civil rights leader (see the Bibliography for suggestions). Then do some of the fun science activities in this kit.
- **Conduct a science activity.** Use an age-appropriate activity from this kit to introduce children to some of the scientific advances made by Percy Julian. Recruit high school students or science club members to help.
- **Create a picture board.** Read a book on Percy Julian or another notable scientist of color, have children work in groups to create a series of drawings or a mural illustrating the person’s life. (Younger children can color the “Percy Julian and His Work” coloring sheet in this kit.) Display the artwork.
- **Sponsor a scavenger hunt.** Use the “Find Percy Julian” handout to introduce families to Percy Julian’s life and work. Award small prizes for each completed scavenger hunt.



“The story I will tell you tonight is a story of wonder and amazement, almost a story of miracles. It is the story of laughter and tears. It is a story of human beings, therefore, a story of meanness, of stupidity, of kindness and nobility.”

—Percy Julian



Contest Incentives

Think about offering incentives for contests and other events. Incentives might include tickets to a local museum or science center, books or videos on Percy Julian or related topics, math games or manipulatives, construction toys, or science project supplies. Contact local retailers such as hobby and craft stores, toy stores, and bookstores for possible donations.

ACTIVITIES USING LIBRARY RESOURCES

ADULTS

- **Arrange a rare book room tour.** Arrange a guided tour for patrons of texts and artifacts related to science or civil rights.
- **Create bookmarks.** Create a series of reproducible bookmarks to highlight your library’s resources on scientists of color and/or civil rights activists. Type your resource information on the bookmarks, copy, and distribute.
- **Highlight original documents.** Plan a discussion about advances in science or the struggle for equal rights. Use copies of primary and secondary source materials related to the topic, then provide guidance on how and where patrons can locate these materials in the library. Resources to highlight include online databases, newspapers, journals, and reference works.

YOUNG ADULTS

- **Sponsor a song-writing contest.** Have young adults research a local or national civil rights leader and create a song—rap, ballad, rock—about that person. Host a public performance of the winning songs at the library.
- **Hold an innovators gallery competition.** Prepare a list of call numbers or keyword search terms related to innovators in science, civil rights, and other areas. Ask young adults to complete “The Innovators Gallery” handout, explaining that the stamp designs and profiles they create will be entered into a contest. Display their creations on a bulletin board and invite patrons to vote for their choice of top innovator. Award a prize for the winning profile(s).

CHILDREN

- **Create resource posters or bookmarks.** Identify the location of resources in the children’s area related to civil rights and its leaders, notable scientists, and the importance of science in our daily lives. Then have children create and hang posters or bookmarks to mark the locations.
- **Play the “Who Am I?” game.** Distribute the “Who Am I?” handout, which asks kids to match each profile to the corresponding scientist.
- **Host a word hunt.** Give children a list of science terms commonly used in chemistry (such as *experiment*, *laboratory*, *data*, and *chemical*) or associated with the Civil Rights movement (such as *Jim Crow*, *segregation*, *discrimination*, and *nonviolence*). Ask them to use library resources to find the meaning of each term. Provide a small prize to each child who completes the task.
- **Make molecules.** Show some images of molecules to children, then provide marshmallows, wooden craft sticks, and other materials for them to construct their own unique molecules.



"For the first time in my life,
I represent a creating, alive,
and wide-awake chemist."
—Percy Julian



LIBRARY DISPLAY IDEAS

PERCY JULIAN'S LIFE AND WORK

- **Books and videos on Percy Julian.** Display one or more photographs of Percy Julian (also the poster in this kit), selected books and videos (see the Bibliography for suggestions), and some of the activity handouts and display sheets in this kit.

Display Tips

- Use copies of the Bibliography, activities, and display sheets provided in this kit to enhance your displays.
- When creating display titles, use a few short words in large type size along with alliterative phrases to grab patrons' attention (for example, "Contributions to Chemistry" or "Julian's Genius").
- Use fabric instead of paper for bulletin board backgrounds—it lasts longer and is easy to reuse.
- Cover tables with cloth or plastic tablecloths. Place one or more small boxes or stands on a table to create risers. Highlight one book or display item on each riser to create an appealing table display.
- To create a poster-size picture for display, photocopy a copyright-free image on a transparency, then use an overhead projector to magnify it onto a large piece of paper taped to a wall. Trace the outline of the image and then color it in to make the poster. You may want to laminate or cover it with clear contact paper.
- Borrow beakers, test tubes, and other science equipment from a local school or university to enhance the display.

BREAKTHROUGHS IN CHEMISTRY

- **Chemistry's benefits.** Create a wall or table display highlighting inventions or discoveries by chemists. Some chemists to consider include Rosalind Franklin (DNA), Leo Baekeland (plastic), Marie Curie (radium), and Percy Julian (plant chemistry). Include selected books and videos about chemistry, and display sheets from this kit.
- **Science activities.** Showcase one of the science activities in this kit along with selected books. Have copies of the activity handout available for distribution.
- **Science fair projects.** Display selected science fair projects created by students. You might want to display a series of projects so that students at different schools in your area can see their work highlighted. Contact local science curriculum coordinators and homeschool groups for referrals.
- **A new generation of scientists.** Invite local colleges and universities to contribute materials (such as academic and extracurricular program information, career information, etc.) for a display on opportunities for students to study science in your city or state. (You may want to use the "I'm a Chemist" display sheet.)

CIVIL RIGHTS MILESTONES

- **The long road to equality.** Select and display titles and resources based on a theme, such as young people and the Civil Rights movement, pivotal court cases, or the history of school desegregation in the United States.
- **Local civil rights events and activists.** Create a display on local events with historical significance and heroes. You might want to weave these events into a national civil rights time line (see books and resources under "Civil Rights Milestones" in the Bibliography, including Civil Rights: A Chronology at www.civilrights.org/library/permanent_collection/resources/crchron.html)

PIONEERING SCIENTISTS OF COLOR

- **Scientists who made a difference.** Create a wall or table book display highlighting scientists of color. Use the enclosed "African American Scientists" display sheet and books in the Bibliography for other scientists. Consider featuring scientists from your area.
- **Did You Know?** Create a display featuring artifacts from the work of scientists of color that answer the question "Did You Know?" Artifacts can include pictures of their inventions or the actual invention (e.g., empty pill bottle). See the "Who Am I?" handout, the "African American Scientists" display sheet, and the Bibliography for suggested scientists.