

Our History

In 1876, Dr. Felix Adler founded a new movement to work toward the advancement of social justice for all based upon ethical values. He encouraged members to express their consciences through moral and humane actions. These principles remain the core of Ethical Culture today.



We founded:

- Ethical Culture Fieldston School
- District Nursing Department (Forerunner of Visiting Nurse Service)
- Child Study Association
- US Settlement House Movement
- Encampment for Citizenship
- Blythedale Children's Hospital
- First Free Kindergarten
- National Ethical Service

We helped establish:

- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- American Civil Liberties Union
- International Humanist and Ethical Union
- National Urban League
- Visiting and Teaching Guild for Crippled Children
- National Child Labor Commission
- Legal Aid Society
- Planned Parenthood Clinics
- International Partners
- New York Committee to Abolish Capital Punishment

Who We Are

The American Ethical Union creates, nurtures, and inspires ethical humanist communities to foster a world that is democratic, compassionate, just, and sustainable.

Member Ethical Societies

- Baltimore Ethical Society** – www.bmoreethical.org
- Boston Ethical Community** – www.bostonethical.org
- Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture** – www.bsec.org
- Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County** – www.ethicalfocus.org
- Ethical Culture Society of Essex County** – www.essexethical.org
- Ethical Culture Society of Silicon Valley** – www.ethicalsiliconvalley.org
- Ethical Culture Society of Suffolk**
- Ethical Culture Society of Westchester** – www.ethicalsocietywestchester.org
- Ethical Humanist Society of Chicago** – www.ethicalhuman.org
- Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island** – www.ehsl.org
- Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia** – www.phillyethics.org
- Ethical Humanist Society of Queens** – www.queenshumanist.com
- Ethical Humanist Society of the Triangle** – www.ncethicalsociety.org
- Ethical Society Mid Rivers** – www.ethicalsocietymr.org
- Ethical Society of Asheville** – www.ethicalsocietyofasheville.org
- Ethical Society of Austin** – www.esoa.org
- Ethical Society of Northern Westchester** – www.esnw.org
- Ethical Society of St. Louis** – www.ethicalstl.org
- New York Society for Ethical Culture** – www.nysec.org
- Northern Virginia Ethical Society** – www.noves.org
- Riverdale-Yonkers Society for Ethical Culture** – www.rysec.org
- Washington Ethical Society** – www.ethicalsociety.org



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Growing Community

National Assemblies

Members gather annually to connect with each other, learn more about Ethical Culture, and explore a social justice theme.

Conferences & Workshops

Educators, teenagers, young adults, and Society committees are able to discuss their views and inspire new ideas for the Movement and the world.

National Leaders Council & Presidents Council

Our Society Leaders and Presidents meet and correspond regularly to develop and share resources that will assist our Societies.

Ethical Education

Our curriculum fosters the development of engaged citizens and powerful ethical leaders of all ages.

Ethical Action

Acknowledging human responsibility for solving human problems, we organize our Movement to act towards solutions on various issues.



Voicing Our Values



We represent Ethical Humanists with:

Resolutions and Public Statements

Amicus Briefs

Online Presence

Marches and Rallies

Social Justice Coalitions

National and International Humanist Organizations

National Ethical Service (United Nations NGO)

Creating an Ethical World

We recognize the unique worth and dignity of all people regardless of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, economic status, or religious beliefs.

We advocate for reason, compassion, and rational thinking so we can progress as individuals, communities, and a world.

We act to elicit the best in others and thereby in ourselves, celebrating with and supporting each other through life.

Our faith is in human goodness and building ethical relationships with each other and the Earth.

We realize the full capacity of our human spirit when we stimulate our thinking with new insights and inspirations.

We train future humanist leaders to promote responsible and ethical living.

