

LIFE'S MOST PERSISTENT AND URGENT QUESTION IS:

What are you doing for others?

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY OF SERVICE

MONDAY, JANUARY 18, 2016

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. devoted his life to equality, social justice, economic advancement, and opportunity for all. He challenged us to build a more perfect union and taught us that everyone has a role to play in making America what it ought to be.

By making service part of our daily lives, we can help realize Dr. King's dream. Together, we can create and sustain opportunities for Americans to strengthen their own and other's economic opportunity, ensure that more young people graduate from high school, support our military families and veterans, and help communities prepare for and recover from disasters. Together, we demonstrate what it means to be citizens.

What is the MLK Day of Service?

After a long struggle, legislation was signed in 1983 to mark the birthday of Dr. King as a federal holiday. Americans first observed the holiday in 1986. In 1994, Congress designated the holiday as a national day of service and charged the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) with leading this effort. Taking place each third Monday in January, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service is the only federal holiday observed as a national day of service – a “day on, not a day off.” This day of service empowers individuals, strengthens communities, bridges barriers, addresses social problems, and moves us closer to Dr. King's vision of a “Beloved Community.”

Why Serve on MLK Day?

Dr. King recognized the power of service. He famously said, “Everyone can be great because everybody can serve.” Observing the Martin Luther King, Jr. federal holiday through service is a way to begin each year with a commitment to making your community a better place. Your service honors Dr. King's life and teachings and helps meet national challenges.

Service also brings people together of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. The MLK Day of

Service encourages all types of service, particularly projects that have a lasting impact and connect participants to ongoing service. The most successful projects connect to the life and teaching of Dr. King, meet a pressing community need, and include time to reflect on his teachings.

MLK Day Grantees

CNCS and The King Center lead the MLK Day of Service in partnership with numerous national nonprofit organizations, faith-based and community groups, state service commissions, and other government agencies. In addition, each year CNCS awards grants to organizations to develop and coordinate service projects on the MLK Day of Service. The grantees are Youth Service America (YSA), Iowa Western Community College, The Arc of the United States, Tennessee State University, Service for Peace and Points of Light Foundation.

For a complete list of organizations in the MLK Service Network and to register your project, go to MLKDay.gov.

Recognize MLK Drum Majors for Service

MLK Day Drum Majors for Service are those volunteers who perform extraordinary everyday acts of service, but who seldom receive recognition. You can also recognize these outstanding volunteers with the Presidents Volunteer Service Award. Drum Major awardees will receive a pin, certificate of achievement, and a letter from the President of the United States. For more information visit MLKDay.gov/awards.

How Can I Continue to Serve After MLK Day?

Start by connecting your MLK Day activities to the work you are doing year-round. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service shines a spotlight on the great work that is already happening and kicks off a year of service, as part of the President's **United We Serve** Initiative. Where and how you serve is up to you – the important thing is to get involved. Visit MLKDay.gov to find a volunteer opportunity in your community and for ideas on planning your own project.

2015 Highlights

The 2015 MLK Day of Service inspired hundreds of thousands of Americans to come together to serve their community. Citizens in all 50 states delivered meals, refurbished schools and community centers, and collected food and clothing. Volunteers also recruited mentors, supported job-seekers, built homes and provided other services for veterans and military families, and helped citizens improve their financial literacy skills. Our nation's leaders including President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama, cabinet secretaries, congressional members, governors and mayors honored Dr. King's legacy through service projects addressing pressing community needs.

2015 Student Art Contest Winners

In honor of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, Scholastic sponsored a Student Art Contest. Students were challenged to create a poster that inspires others to serve and answers Dr. King's question, "What are you doing for

others?" for a chance to win a tablet. The 12 winning posters were displayed at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Bookstore in Washington, D.C.



Other Resources

A wide variety of free MLK Day resources for individuals and organizations are available at MLKDay.gov.

These include:

- Tools to register your MLK Day project
- Tools to find a MLK Day project in your local area
- Toolkits with step-by-step instructions for planning a project that will have lasting impact
- Project ideas, needs assessments, community partnerships, ideas for children, and newsworthy projects
- Webinar dates and presentations
- Weekly updates

We encourage organizations to join us in supporting and implementing projects that increase economic opportunities, improve education, support veterans and military families, and help communities prepare for and recover from disasters.

Find toolkits to help plan your projects at MLKDay.gov.