

*"The time is always
ripe to do right."*

MARTIN LUTHER KING

DAY CELEBRATION

Princeton University's annual celebration of
Martin Luther King Jr.
January 17, 2005 • 1:30 to 3 p.m.
Richardson Auditorium



The Honorable Yvonne Smith Segars

The State of New Jersey Public Defender

In 2002 Governor McGreevey appointed Yvonne Smith Segars as the New Jersey public defender. The 1,200-member staff of the Office of the Public Defender includes more than 500 attorneys and provides an array of defense services for trial, appellate, and juvenile representation. In addition, the multifaceted agency represents abused children through the Law Guardian Unit; the mentally ill through the Division of Mental Health and Guardianship Advocacy; individuals facing termination of parental rights through the Parental Representation Unit; and offers mediation services through the Office of Dispute Settlement.

Prior to this appointment, Public Defender Segars served as the first assistant in the Essex County Office. In addition to her supervisory and administrative duties, she tried a gamut of criminal cases from assault to homicide. Ms. Segars previously served as bond counsel with the New Jersey law firm of McManimon & Scotland, LLC, where she gained experience in the area of municipal finance and transactional law.

A pioneer in the New Jersey drug court movement, Ms. Segars has lectured nationally on drug courts and policies related to criminal justice and drug treatment. She served as the first drug court public defender in Essex County, is a founding member of the New Jersey Network of Drug Court Professionals, and created the first statewide drug court unit in the agency. Ms. Segars serves on the board of directors for the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, and is a core faculty member for the Justice Management Institute and the National Drug Court Institute. She also has served as peer reviewer and consultant for the U.S. Department of Justice and continues to aggressively participate in and advocate for drug courts and training on both national and local levels.

In her capacity as the law guardian for New Jersey, Ms. Segars plays an active role in the child welfare reform movement in the state and has launched initiatives to ensure that both the law guardian and juvenile defense services offices are equipped to provide the highest quality of legal representation to

the children involved in New Jersey's court system. Public Defender Segars serves on the Governor's Cabinet for Children, which was created in 2003 to develop a strategic plan for strengthening children and family services in New Jersey. She is a member of the Division of Youth and Family Services Staffing and Outcome Review Panel, and chair of that group's Subcommittee on Juveniles in Detention.

Additionally, Public Defender Segars serves as vice-chair of the newly established New Jersey State Sentencing Commission, which is charged with reviewing the state's sentencing scheme and underlying policies with an eye toward reform. She is a member of the Criminal Justice Subcommittee of Acting Governor Codey's newly formed Mental Health Task Force.

Ms. Segars has appeared as a legal commentator on MS-NBC, Court-TV, Fox News Channel's *The Crier Report*, Fox News, *Garden State Matters* on UPN-9, NJN's *Due Process* and *Comcast Newsmakers*. In 2004 she received the Leadership Award from the Association of Black Women Lawyers, was named "Professional Woman of the Year" by The National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, and was presented with the 2004 Treatment Award from the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey for her collaborative efforts with that organization and the drug court program. Also, she is the recipient of the Rutgers Law School 2004 Distinguished Alumna Award and was named Citizen of the Year 2004 by the Omega Psi Phi fraternity, Nu Beta Beta Chapter.

Ms. Segars received her J.D. from Rutgers School of Law, Newark, and her B.A. in psychology from Kean University. She is married and is the proud mother of two children.

Program

Greetings Deborah K. Blanks
Associate Dean, Office of Religious Life

Introduction of President Terri Harris Reed
Associate Provost for Institutional Equity

Remarks and Journey Award Presentation Shirley M. Tilghman
President

Student Awards Presentations Lauren D. Robinson-Brown
MLK Committee Convener

Introduction of Keynote Antoinette L. Seaberry
Class of 2005

Keynote Address Yvonne Smith Segars
State of New Jersey Public Defender

Musical Selection CASYM Steel Orchestra

“The time is always
ripe to do right.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
Letter from the Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963

The Journey Award

Martin Luther King Jr. was a powerful advocate for human rights who became one of the most noted African Americans in history. Yet even King acknowledged that his work represented the continuation of a journey started by others before him, including some of his personal mentors and heroes such as Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, Jesus Christ, A. Philip Randolph, and Mahatma Gandhi. King also predicted that the journey would not end with his own death. He often warned that this journey was not an easy path, but a courageous one. In his 1967 address, "Where Do We Go From Here?" King said: "I must confess, my friends, the road ahead will not always be smooth. There will be still rocky places of frustration and meandering points of bewilderment. There will be inevitable setbacks here and there. There will be those moments when the buoyancy of hope will be transformed into the fatigue of despair. Our dreams will sometimes be shattered and our ethereal hopes

blasted. . . . Difficult and painful as it is, we must walk on in the days ahead with an audacious faith in the future." And so, the journey continues.

The MLK Day Journey Award has been created to recognize annually members of the Princeton University faculty, staff, or student body who best represent the continued journey to achieve King's vision for America. Awardees have demonstrated that they support King's philosophy and teachings, and that they have actively contributed to the improvement of civil rights and/or human rights, particularly in manners that have positively affected the Princeton University community.

President Shirley M. Tilghman and the MLK Day Celebration Committee are pleased to honor the 2004–05 Journey awardees and are grateful for their continued efforts.

Journey Award for Special Achievement Dylan H. Tatz



Dylan Tatz single-handedly researched, coordinated, and hosted the week-long conference on Black-Jewish relations, held on campus in March 2004, that was modeled after Dr. King's historic partnership with Jewish Americans in their common struggle for civil rights. The conference included two panel discussions, a movie screening, and a series of dialogue

groups, highlighted by speakers Murray Friedman and Henry Louis Gates Jr. Dylan arranged for event support from The Bildner Fund – Dialogue@Princeton, the Black Student Union, the Carl A. Fields Center for Equality and Cultural Understanding, the Center for Jewish Life, the Office of Religious Life, the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students, the PACE Center for Community Service, the Program in African-American Studies, the Program in Judaic Studies, the Undergraduate Student Government, the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, CommonSense, and Paideia. He continues to work diligently to raise awareness about race relations on campus as chair of the Princeton Committee on Prejudice.

As his nomination noted, "Dylan personifies Dr. King's example of a person who thinks globally and acts locally. Our community is all the better because of his energy and commitment."

Biography:

Dylan Tatz is a junior religion major pursuing certificates in Judaic studies and European cultural studies. Dylan hails from New York City, where he attended Stuyvesant High School. He works as programming assistant at the Center for Jewish Life, plays baritone saxophone in the marching band, and is a freelance clarinetist. He is founder and chair of the Princeton Committee on Prejudice.



AWARDS

Journey Award for Lifetime Service

Robert K. Durkee



Bob Durkee's advocacy for improving race relations on Princeton's campus can be traced back to 1967 when he wrote a *Daily Princetonian* article, "The Negro at Princeton," that won a first place journalism award in a national contest.

The article was published in the 1971 anthology "Black Hands on a White Face," among works by noted authors such as Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Zora Neale Hurston, and William Faulkner. The account, the first of its kind at Princeton conducted at a pivotal time in the University's history, offered a realistic portrait of the complications of race relations, including feelings of isolation, distrust, and resentment. "For most of the black students, the Princeton campus provides the background for perplexing psychological pressures and profound philosophical probings," Durkee wrote and went on to conclude the article with the optimistic, "Maybe someday, Princeton will become in practice what she aspires to in theory." In the more than three decades since, Durkee has continued his work to ensure that Princeton lives up to its promise and offers its people of color meaningful experiences by helping to: increase diversity in the student body, in hiring and on boards; found significant programs such as the University's annual MLK Day celebration and the Princeton Prize in Race Relations, and raise awareness about causes, including fair labor practices; and by exhibiting leadership in decision making that affects people of color and Princeton's legacy.

As his nomination noted, "Bob has worked diligently to ensure that the University is representative of a diverse community, among its student body, faculty and staff and board of trustees. He has worked with the Alumni Council to encour-

age a wide diversity of alumni, particularly alumni of color, to become more actively involved in Princeton, related activities....He has been a strong advocate for diversity in all areas of campus life."

Biography:

Durkee, a member of the class of 1969, joined the administration in the spring of 1972 as assistant to the president and, after a year on leave to serve as executive assistant to the president of the Washington, D.C.-based Association of American Universities, was appointed vice president for public affairs in 1978. In this capacity he oversees the offices of the Alumni Council, communications, community and state affairs, government affairs, and public affairs. He also has served as vice president and secretary of the University since January 1, 2004.

Durkee majored in the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and graduated from Princeton magna cum laude. As an undergraduate, he was editor-in-chief of the *Daily Princetonian* and an undergraduate columnist for the *Princeton Alumni Weekly*. After teaching fifth and sixth grades for three years in the Trenton, N.J., public schools and earning a master of arts in teaching degree from Montclair State University, he returned to work at Princeton.



Poster contest Grades 4–6

First Prize	Brooke Ferenczy and Sarah Kreutzer, grade 5, Holland Brook School, Readington
Second Prize	Cherie Y. Gu, grade 6, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton
Third Prize	Lilia Sanzalone, grade 6, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton
Honorable Mention	Saira Bhayat, grade 6, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton Monica Chon, grade 6, John Witherspoon School, Princeton Yael Davidov, grade 6, John Witherspoon School, Princeton Simon James, grade 5, American Boychoir School, Princeton Nicole Keim, grade 5, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton Ryan Lamarca, grade 5, Yardville Elementary School, Hamilton Hayley Sopko, grade 5, Yardville Elementary School, Hamilton

Essay contest Grades 7–8

First Prize	Erica Humphrey, grade 7, Melvin H. Kreps Middle School, Hightstown
Second Prize	Sophia Ginez, grade 7, Crossroads South Middle School, Monmouth Junction
Third Prize	Sarah Alexandra Caswell, grade 7, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton
Honorable Mention	Maya Chhabra, grade 7, John Witherspoon School, Princeton Allysa Dittmar, grade 7, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton Alexandra Ferrera, grade 7, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton Phillip Grudzina, grade 8, Chapin School, Princeton Meghan Hurley, grade 8, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton Sasank Isola, grade 7, Community Middle School, West Windsor Lucy Melvin, grade 8, First Baptist Church, Princeton

Grades 9–10

First Prize	Nithya Matthews, grade 9, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton
Second Prize	Brianna Pesce, grade 10, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton
Third Prize	Yassamine Sheeva Ebadat, grade 9, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton
Honorable Mention	Matthew Bryant, grade 10, Hightstown High School, Hightstown Niamh Cloughley, grade 9, Villa Victoria Academy, Trenton Kelly Dunham, grade 10, Villa Victoria Academy, Trenton Brandon Johnson, grade 9, Rancocas Valley Regional High School, Mount Holly Lindy Klinger, grade 9, New Jersey School for the Deaf, Katzenbach Campus, Trenton Kasuni Nanayakkara, grade 10, Steinert High School, Hamilton Clare Wiles, grade 9, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton

Grades 11–12

First Prize	Meaghan Byrne, grade 11, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton
Second Prize	Christian Ginez, grade 11, South Brunswick High School, South Brunswick
Third Prize	Kristin Nuzzio, grade 12, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton
Honorable Mention	Manisha Bhattacharya, grade 12, West Windsor-Plainsboro High School South, Princeton Junction Christopher Bryant, grade 11, Hightstown High School, Hightstown Ellen Kraft, grade 11, Villa Victoria Academy, Trenton Rejon Littlepage, grade 12, Trenton High School West, Trenton Rémi Meehan, grade 11, West Windsor-Plainsboro High School South, Princeton Junction Michele Russo, grade 11, Villa Victoria Academy, Trenton Kay Zhang, grade 11, Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville

Video contest Grades 7–12

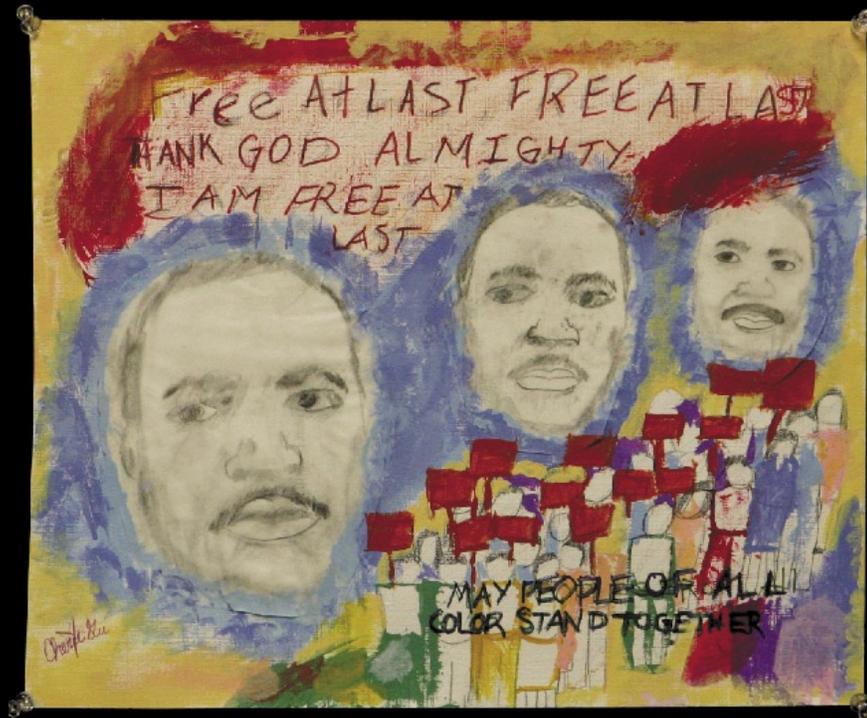
First Prize	Alexandra and Isabelle Kasdin, grade 7, John Witherspoon School, Princeton
Second Prize	Anthony Harrison, grade 9, New Jersey School for the Deaf, Katzenbach Campus, Trenton
Third Prize	Dominic Harrison, grade 9, New Jersey School for the Deaf, Katzenbach Campus, Trenton
Honorable Mention	Claudia Confoy, grade 9, Villa Victoria Academy, Trenton Jacob Gonzalez, grade 8, Grice School, Hamilton Kathryn Rogers, grade 8, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton

First Prize Winner



Brooke Ferenczy and Sarah Kreutzer
Grade 5, Holland Brook School, Readington

Second Prize Winner



Cherie Y. Gu
Grade 6, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton

Poster Contest

Excerpts

For its 2005 essay contest, Princeton University asked New Jersey students in grades 7 through 12 to help commemorate the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. by submitting one original essay about a personal journey, which the student has completed or is undertaking currently, and how it relates to the goals and lessons of Martin Luther King's journey to improve civil and/or human rights. Students also were permitted to explore this topic through the presentation of one original VHS, DVD, CD-ROM or PowerPoint presentation. Excerpts from some of the essays follow:

Grades 7–8

Erica Humphrey, grade 7, Melvin H. Kreps Middle School, Hightstown
First Prize

I've realized many things about myself and about the world over the last four years, just like I'm sure Martin Luther King Junior did during his life. It's been made clear to me that if you don't fight for what you want, you shouldn't expect it to happen. That's why I do as much as I can for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation because they are our best chance at a cure. I donate money and get friends to also. I participate in the walk every year. I volunteer there during my spare time over the summer. Whatever I can do, I do, just like Martin was so compelled to do.

I've realized how uneducated so many people are about diabetes. Many of them have no idea how much work, time, and effort it takes to control. I'm sure Martin Luther King Junior got frustrated during the fight for his dream, just like I have. People who aren't affected by your cause don't even think about it, don't even care. That is something that he tried to fix and overcome. It's something I hope to conquer as well.

Sophia Ginez, grade 7, Crossroads South Middle School, Monmouth Junction
Second Prize

My journey of growing sensitivity to the lack of tolerance for intellectual differences began as I observed the prejudice my gifted older brother has gone through simply because he is very smart. A new and different phase of the journey began when my younger sister was diagnosed with learning disabilities. I noticed the social rejection and academic struggles she faces regularly. Lastly, I realized that even students in the middle of the spectrum of academic ability suffer from the effects of intellectual intolerance. For example, average students in New Jersey can sometimes feel unworthy if they are not taking honors and advanced classes. Intolerance of intellectual differences is not just. A person cannot change the quality of his brain, just like he cannot change the color of his skin. For this reason, I am convinced that this is a human rights issue—maybe even one that Martin Luther King would talk about if he were alive today.

In a "Letter from Birmingham Jail," King states, "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." His words express the idea I had in mind when I decided that I would begin to fight the injustice I saw in my own school community.

Sarah Alexandra Caswell, grade 7, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton
Third Prize

Even the smallest of mountains can be frustrating to some. Every summer I climb the same mountain, Rattlesnake, and it seems to get easier every year. When I start out, large boulders cause me to take great jumps to make my way past them. I am sure that Mr. King had to take leaps of his own when he started out. However, his leaps of faith and courage were much bigger and important.

Rattlesnake seems to twist and turn and jump out at you at every wrong moment: rocks rolling from nowhere, roots reappearing right

under your feet, sharp pivots that lead you off the path, dirt and other sediments slipping out of your foot's grip, and more obstacles. There were so many times when King could have been arrested, some of them he was, and others he got away. But he kept going, knowing that there was a light somewhere at the end of his tunnel, a bright, beautiful light, that to King meant peace. No matter how long it would take, no matter the obstacles, he would reach the top of his mountain.

Maya Chhabra, grade 7, John Witherspoon School, Princeton
Honorable Mention

He's doing it again. The stupid accent thing. I turn around; try to tell him to stop. I don't know if he'll listen. I don't know if he cares. But when he does it again, next week, I know he didn't. . . . I know one thing: next time someone makes a hateful joke, sings a rude, discriminatory song, or anything like that, I'll say something. And even if their eyes and ears and hearts are closed, it will feel finished to me. For them, it is the listening that matters. For the speaker, it's different. It's the telling that makes the difference.

Allysa Dittmar, grade 7, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton
Honorable Mention

I was born into the world deaf. My family was hearing. I was lost, hearing and understanding nothing. . . . Race, handicap, religion, and looks do not matter. It is about the inside of your souls and hearts. Martin Luther King Jr. is a person who changed the world and me.

Phillip Grudzina, grade 8, Chapin School, Princeton
Honorable Mention

Today, in these days of enlightenment, when the world of science is becoming more and more clear to us everyday, it is still a significant problem in the United States of America for our children to find and receive a good education. Day by day, many children are being left behind on the path of knowledge. But now is the time to change. Now is the time to strengthen our children, so that we can build a bright future flourishing with knowledge and prosperity.

Sasank Isola, grade 7, Community Middle School, West Windsor
Honorable Mention

Unfortunately, humans seem to be the only species on this planet, if not in this universe, that fight and kill each other because they can't settle trivial differences. Too many wars have racked earth, due to religious beliefs! If humans are considered the most intelligent creatures on this particular planet, where has all this "intelligence" gone?

Lucy Melvin, grade 8, First Baptist Church, Princeton
Honorable Mention

I would like to be like Dr. King who was fearless and optimistic. He was not only a dreamer, he was a prophet and minister, and he was also a great leader. . . . For as long as I live, I hold dear the memories of Dr. King. I shall continue my journey up the ladder of education and never stop climbing to the very top.

Excerpts

Alexandra Ferrera, grade 7, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton
Honorable Mention

On Saturday mornings, 30 children come rushing up to greet me as I carry boxes of crafts into the Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen in Trenton. . . . Dr. King inspires us to work as hard as we can to deal with the challenges of our own individual journeys in life. We can follow Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by helping others and making the world a better place for everyone. We can fight to end hate using the weapon of love.

Meghan Hurley, grade 8, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton
Honorable Mention

Martin Luther King and I share a passion. The passion to make change. When I volunteer in the homeless shelter, I feel good about myself helping homeless people but I feel sad knowing that I will go home to a warm house with a home—cooked meal and a room to call my own, but they will not. . . . If we are fortunate enough to have a home, and hot meals, and loving family members, we need to give back to the community.

Grades 9–10

Nithya Matthews, grade 9, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton
First Prize

Every step Martin Luther King took on his journey during the Civil Rights movement unfolded a new beginning. Even though there were obstacles that challenged this leader, Martin Luther King persevered, placing one foot in front of the other toward peace and equality. As a peace activist and a devoted Christian, he relied on his faith in God and in his people to carry him through. I also undertook a similar journey. My journey did not bring such a drastic change as did Martin Luther King's, but it did cause a spiritual change and harbored values and teachings that King used to improve civil rights.

I spent some of my life in India in the small city of Pune. . . . As a child I offered to help the children in these slums. This did not just mean giving them my prized doll collection, but also offering my friendship and support. I felt as though I was in the forefront of a battle. This was a battle for love and equal treatment of these children, who often only experienced the cruel glares and ignorance from members of the community.

Brianna Pesce, grade 10, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton
Second Prize

A journey is traveling from one point to another, through which you overcome many obstacles, which cause you to grow and mature. A journey can be many things: spiritual, physical or mental. When it is said that Martin Luther King Jr. journeyed, he did so in every sense of the word. Everyone's life is one big journey, but not all people feel like they can compare themselves to King because they have not done something "life changing." But who are we to say that a person has not changed a life? . . . I believe that through all the difficult times King went through on his journey, he focused on the progress he was making, and not the things that occurred in the past. I have picked up some baggage on this stage of my journey, and have also left a lot behind, but the things I could never lose are the easiest to carry.

Yassamine Sheeva Ebadat, grade 9, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton
Third Prize

Just as Martin Luther King was a black man, striving and struggling to be accepted in a community of whites, I am trying to be accepted as a Muslim. After the horrifying deeds of Osama Bin Laden, a so-called "Muslim," the view of Islam was distorted forever. . . . His [King's] "dreams" spoke to me, and showed me that if you really believe in something, you can make others believe in it, too. My goals are much like his because I hope that some day, people all over the world, whether it be in America, in the Middle East, or in Africa, can live together as one.

Matthew Bryant, grade 10, Hightstown High School, Hightstown
Honorable Mention

Martin Luther King Jr. was just one person, but he accomplished a lot for others. I am just one person, but I, too, am able to accomplish a lot for others. Martin Luther King Jr. has made me realize that even in small matters, it is very important for me to stand up for principles. Even in small matters, it is important for me to stand up for others and to help others. Today, these small issues might appear small, but tomorrow, those small issues just might have a greater impact in the life of someone else.

Niamh Cloughley, grade 9, Villa Victoria Academy, Trenton
Honorable Mention

Countless innocent people have been killed or abused because of the color of their skin, just as Dr. King was. However, this is not the only source of discrimination in our world, even today. People in Pakistan and Israel are fighting against discrimination just as grave as racial: religious discrimination.

I am a Roman Catholic; I am 14. It is my belief that in agreeing to become a part of the Church, I have agreed to make one of the most challenging journeys of my life. It is not, by any stretch of the imagination, easy to be a Catholic teenager.

Kelly Dunham, grade 10, Villa Victoria Academy, Trenton
Honorable Mention

I am on a quest, and have been on this quest for a long time, to be accepted by my peers, as an equal, and to find others like myself whom I would be able to find comfort in, and them in me. It's hard when you're the only one in your family, or school, or even town, who dresses the way that you dress, and listens to the music that you listen to, and does the things that you do. When you are treated as a pariah before you have a chance to even say a word, a sense of injustice is born inside of you.

Brandon Johnson, grade 9, Rancocas Valley Regional High School, Mount Holly
Honorable Mention

Martin Luther King's journey in life undoubtedly saved me from many hard journeys in my life. He experienced hardships that one would think impossible, all of which were done to obtain his culture's freedom. If Martin Luther King had not led our people through so many non-violent protests, there is no telling what the present world would be like.

Excerpts

Lindy Klinger, grade 9, New Jersey School for the Deaf, Katzenbach Campus, Trenton

Honorable Mention

Hearing and deaf people should be cooperating together. It's the same thing with black and white people. People should not be separate because of skin color. It's not fair.

Some people think deaf people are dumb and can't do anything. It's not true. Deaf people can do anything except hear! Sometimes, hearing people don't understand our deaf culture. I don't like people who make fun of deaf people. It hurts our feelings.

Kasuni Nanayakkara, grade 10 Steinert High School, Hamilton

Honorable Mention

. . . it was because of prominent people like Dr. King that people like me, born of Asian descent, have a notable place in this world. . . My journey these last 15 years has been a lot like the profound expedition Dr. King undertook during the civil rights movement. Earlier in my years, I too had to fight the cruelty of racism and I too had protested against this unfair treatment. I had been forced to undergo biased treatment for several years, and many people had judged me by the color of my skin.

Clare Wiles, grade 9, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton

Honorable Mention

Throughout the course of history, Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy has remained an inspiration for those who continue their struggles over the harsh path of life. Although his journey to end the racial injustice clouding over us was filled with insurmountable obstacles and crushing hatred, his perseverance and dedication shone like a bright light through that darkened time. He shouldered through deep crevasses and over tall mountains, alone at times in an unforgiving world, but never ceased to keep hope for better days. . . .

Last summer, I worked in a school for young autistic children. . . . Although I was supposed to be their teacher, they taught me a truly important lesson—a lesson on acceptance, a lesson on kindness, a lesson on love.

Grades 11–12

Meaghan Byrne, grade 11, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton

First Prize

Although the Civil Rights movement occurred over 40 years ago, Martin Luther King's message of social and racial justice lives on in the actions of individuals and organizations today. King's words and actions have reverberated throughout the world and impacted the way society views its ills. Organizations like Oxfam, Doctors Without Borders, and Fair Trade carry on King's message of justice and inclusiveness by helping the impoverished and diseased around the world discover a better standard of living. After discovering the Fair Trade organization last year while on an exchange program in Scotland, I have become a Fair Trade advocate within my own community. . . . Fair Trade is a part of my journey to spread awareness in the community and encourage social justice and inclusiveness for people all over the world. I have only recently undertaken the simplistic project of spreading awareness at my own high school, but I hope that perhaps it will spread into my town. I would love to see coffee shops with posters for Fair Trade, or schools

that bought only fairly traded coffee, but I know that it can't be achieved without a lot of work.

Christian Ginez, grade 11, South Brunswick High School, South Brunswick

Second Prize

Prejudice of all sorts abounds today, as it has since America's inception. For this reason, it is extremely nearsighted to view Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as a champion of only one race of people. His untimely death put an end to his work, and while steps are being taken to eradicate prejudice against African Americans, prejudice against other groups persists. It persists as strongly now as it did during the times of Rev. King, Abraham Lincoln, and Thomas Jefferson. Clearly, the encompassing goal of Dr. King is yet unaccomplished. He championed liberty and equality for all, "cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states" (Letter from Birmingham City Jail).

Because I am Latino, the interconnected nature of social equality is particularly evident to me. . . . It has become my mission to use my abilities and successes to disprove traditional Hispanic stereotypes. I strive to give those who hold prejudiced opinions a fresh perspective, and to provide a living example, contrary to their ill-conceived notions. It would be arrogant of me to claim that I carry the weight of a race on my shoulders, and I am not naive enough to believe that that is the case. But I consider it my duty and my obligation, in all that I do, to represent the contradictory example to every prejudicial stereotype or assumption, and to affect a change in that manner.

Kristin Nuzzio, grade 12, Stuart Country Day School, Princeton

Third Prize

As my face was illuminated by the sparkles of Tijuana at night, all I could see was the "Grande Jesús." Rising brilliantly above the magenta and lime-green homes below, the statue's arms were outstretched as if the whole city was wrapped in its enormous embrace. I felt protected by it. Earlier that day, I mixed 100 bags of cement by hand with members of local Mexican communities. Working side by side, we constructed a sidewalk, a school floor, and a volleyball court. Besides being extremely proud of what I accomplished physically, I felt a solid spiritual connection with the people that I met. Their encouraging smiles, knowing glances, and genuine desires to improve their lives were inspiring. . . . Dr. King desired a world where all people, regardless of race or background, could come together and uphold the value of humanity. On my journey to better understand another culture and another way of life, the people that I met proved to me that even if their situation was not the best, they anticipated the future of their children with optimism.

Manisha Bhattacharya, grade 12, West Windsor-Plainsboro High School

South, Princeton Junction

Honorable Mention

Dr. King represented a people who still struggled with discrimination after gaining freedom, but he was persistent enough to look to the future and demand that American legislation permanently recognize the equality of all races. Today we may recognize and acknowledge the magnitude of the HIV/AIDS epidemic ravaging the developing world, but I feel that it is necessary to bring this cause to the forefront of the international community's attention until they take the necessary political and economic action to find a solution for one of the most critical problems faced by humanity.

Excerpts

Christopher Bryant, grade 11, Hightstown High School, Hightstown
Honorable Mention

The most recent event that has occurred in my life involving civil and human rights occurred this year. A nice, funny, innocent kid in my class was being picked on by some other students. There was only one reason why these students decided to pick on this boy. This boy was a little bit different because he has cerebral palsy. He was just a little bit different. . . . I knew I had to fight for this boy's rights. I had to fight with wisdom.

Ellen Kraft, grade 11, Villa Victoria Academy, Trenton
Honorable Mention

Reflecting upon the challenge of writing this essay, I began to see Martin Luther King as a “foster father” to his cause: equal opportunity for African American “children.” With further thought, I was able to create a parallel metaphor to today's New Jersey foster care system. The White America is the social worker, who, consumed by the process and status quo, has lost perspective and forgotten the child; Martin Luther King was the foster parent who fought for the child, advocating what was best for it. Finally, Black America was the child, placed into a new setting that sometimes frightened, sometimes angered, and usually frustrated it.

Rejon Littlepage, grade 12, Trenton High School West, Trenton
Honorable Mention

As Dr. King spent his time trying to etch the beliefs of darkness being natural into the minds of southern whites, I try to enlighten the African Americans of the north with it. Many of my peers believe that to be dark is a bad thing. For example, if my friends were to envision someone as ugly or just unattractive they would usually see a dark-skinned person. I do believe that this is the image that white America has engrained into our minds, and my struggle is to shatter that negativity and to replace it with the knowledge that to be black is to be unique—to be unique is to be beautiful!

Rémi Meehan, grade 11, West Windsor-Plainsboro High School South,
Princeton Junction
Honorable Mention

My journey through the German Alps helped me comprehend that we should embrace black people rather than reject them. Martin Luther King's journey was the quest to establish a nation where both blacks and whites can taste the luscious fruit of liberty. But it is imperative that we do not view these journeys as two separate ones, but as one voyage leading to one destination.

Michele Russo, grade 11, Villa Victoria Academy, Trenton
Honorable Mention

Equality rings the bells of freedom, but there is a silent symphony playing in the background for those who are still segregated. Social structures blatantly show the discrimination of the classes, especially the poor. . . . I have a dream to recognize the injustice in the world, such as poverty, and take action, the beginning of my inspiring journey. Providing gifts to unfortunate families and repairing homes for certain families in Appalachia are only the inchoate steps of the journey to follow my dream. Compassion for others is the crucial feeling I reached before I desired to go on these trips.

Kay Zhang, grade 11, Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville
Honorable Mention

I am a work in progress. Maybe I will grow to be a rhythmic poem, with my beats all in syncopation, and my lines uninterrupted by caesuras, internally rhyming with myself, inviting the rest of the world to join me in external harmony. It is my confidence in my potential that allows me to move on. I don't just have a dream, I am a dreamer, and as Dr. King's life journey shows, dreams do come true.

The MLK Day student contests are open to all 4 to 12 graders in New Jersey. Students may submit entries as individuals or through their schools or community organizations. Information on next year's contests will be posted at www.princeton.edu/pr/mlk, so please check the site periodically for updates. Generally, contest submissions are due in November, before Thanksgiving.

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