

**CULTURAL
AWARENESS**

OBSERVANCE



Martin Luther King Jr. Information Base

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JANUARY

Martin Luther King Jr.
People



When he was born, Martin Luther King Jr.'s name was Michael King. A few years later, his father (also Michael King) changed his name to Martin Luther King Sr., in honor of the great protestant reformer. At that time, his son's name was changed to Martin Luther King Jr.

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/faqs>

Martin Luther King Jr. was born in Atlanta, Georgia. He became a prominent leader in the American Civil Rights Movement in 1955 when he served as a spokesperson for the Montgomery Bus Boycott –a campaign by the African American population of Montgomery, Alabama, to force the integration of the city's busses. He is widely regarded as America's pre-eminent advocate of nonviolence and one of the greatest nonviolent leaders in world history.

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/about-dr-king>

The MLK Day of Service is the only federal holiday observed as a national day of service –“a day on, not a day off.”

In 1994, Congress designated the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday as a national day of service and charged the Corporation for National and Community Service with leading the effort. Taking place each year on the third Monday in January, the MLK Day of Service is the only federal holiday observed as a national day of service –a “day on, not a day off.”

<http://mlkday.gov/about/serveonkingday.php>

Martin Luther King Jr. was only 35 years old when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. He called this honor “the most significant international endorsement possible of the civil rights struggle.” The prize money that came with the award was distributed among several major civil rights organizations upon Dr. King’s request.

Garrow, David J. Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Leadership Conference. New York: William Morrow and Co. , Inc. 1986.

On August 28, 1963, more than 250,000 people participated in the “March on Washington for Freedom.” It was the largest demonstration for human rights in United States history, as well as a rare display of unity among the various civil rights organizations. The event began with a rally at the Washington Monument. Participants then marched the mile-long National Mall to the Lincoln Memorial, where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his “I Have a Dream” speech.

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=96>

Less than 13 years of nonviolent leadership ended abruptly and tragically on April 4, 1968, when Dr. King was assassinated at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. Later in 1968, Dr. King's wife, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, officially founded the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, which she dedicated to being a "living memorial" aimed at continuing Dr. King's work on important social ills around the world.

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/about-dr-king>

Martin Luther King Jr.'s Beloved Community is a global vision, in which all people can share in the wealth of the earth. In the Beloved Community, poverty, hunger and homelessness will not be tolerated because international standards of human decency will not allow it. Racism and all forms of discrimination, bigotry and prejudice will be replaced by an all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood.

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy>

Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, Nobel Peace Prize lecture and "Letter from Birmingham Jail" are among the most revered orations and writings in the English language. His accomplishments are now taught to American children of all races, and his teachings are studied by scholars and students worldwide.

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/about-dr-king>

In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was one of the driving forces behind the March for Jobs and Freedom, more commonly known as the “March on Washington,” which drew over a quarter-million people to the national mall. It was at this march that Dr. King delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech, which cemented his status as a social change leader and helped inspire the nation to act on civil rights. Dr. King was later named Time magazine’s “Man of the Year.”

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/about-dr-king>

Born January 15, 1929, Martin Luther King Jr. was a Baptist minister and social activist who led the civil rights movement in the United States from the mid-1950s until his assassination in 1968. His leadership was fundamental to the movement's success in ending the legal segregation of African Americans in the South and other parts of the United States.

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/>

Dr. King was arrested 30 times for his participation in civil rights activities. While Dr. King preached about justice, empowerment, love and peace, in the final months of his life, his attention was turned to fighting poverty. Sadly, more Americans live in poverty today than during Dr. King's lifetime. Forty-seven million Americans currently fall below the poverty line.

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/days-service/martin-luther-king-jr-day-service/about-dr-king-and-mlk-day>

Dr. King skipped several grades in elementary school and entered Booker T. Washington High School in 1942 at the age of 13. At 15, he graduated high school and enrolled in Morehouse College, where he learned of the advantages of the ministry in the fight against social injustice and decided to become a pastor. Just 2 years later, Dr. King was ordained as the assistant pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Oates, S. B. (1982). Let the Trumpet Sound: The life of Martin Luther King, Jr. New York: The New American Library, Inc.

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The entire nation was shocked by the murder of Dr. King. Some passionate followers rioted in larger cities, while others mourned in silent sadness. President Johnson declared the following Sunday, April 7th, a day of mourning. Governments worldwide announced their concern and sense of loss.

Oates, S. B. (1982). Let the Trumpet Sound: The life of Martin Luther King, Jr. New York: The New American Library, Inc.

Martin Luther King was first introduced to the influence of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948 while attending Crozer Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania. In a lecture by Dr. Mordecai W. Johnson, King learned of the push for nonviolent social change that Gandhi instilled in his followers. He left the lecture believing that the same Gandhian nonviolence could change race relations in America, too.

Oates, Stephen B. Let the Trumpet Sound: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr. New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1982.

On November 13, 1956, the Montgomery City Lines resumed full service on all of its routes. This was the day following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to declare Alabama's laws requiring segregation on buses unconstitutional. The Montgomery Bus Boycott was over. Upon this victory, Dr. King instructed his followers "to go back to the buses with humility and meekness...We must act in such a way as to make possible a coming together of white people and colored people on the basis of real harmony of interests and understanding. We seek an integration based on mutual respect...We must now move from protest to reconciliation."

Ansboro, John L. Martin Luther King Jr.: The Making of a Mind. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983.

Section Photo

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/mlkday>

Martin Luther King Jr.

Day of Service



In 1994, Congress designated the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday as a national day of service and charged the Corporation for National and Community Service with leading the effort. Taking place each year on the third Monday in January, the MLK Day of Service is the only federal holiday observed as a national day of service—a “day on, not a day off.”

<http://mlkday.gov/about/serveonkingday.php>

United We Serve, President Obama’s nationwide service initiative, is built on the belief that ordinary people can come together and achieve extraordinary things when given the proper tools. This initiative aims to both expand the impact of existing organizations by engaging new volunteers in their work and encourage volunteers to develop their own do-it-yourself projects. To learn more, visit [serve.gov](http://www.serve.gov).

<http://www.serve.gov/?q=site-page/about-united-we-serve>

Established in 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a federal agency that engages more than 5 million Americans in service through its core programs—Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and the Social Innovation Fund—and leads President Obama’s national call to service initiative, United We Serve. The mission of CNCS is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/who-we-are>

The Salvation Army’s motto “Doing the Most Good” conveys its mission to feed, clothe, comfort, care, and rebuild broken homes and broken lives. It operates 7,546 centers in communities across the U.S. These include food distribution, disaster relief, rehabilitation centers, anti-human trafficking efforts, and children's programs. This work is funded through kettle donations, corporate contributions, and the sale of goods donated to Salvation Army Family Stores.

<http://www.salvationarmyusa.org/usn/about>

The American Red Cross exists to provide compassionate care to those in need. Its network of generous donors, volunteers, and employees share a mission of preventing and relieving suffering, in the U.S. and around the world, through five key service areas: disaster relief, supporting America’s military families, lifesaving blood, health and safety services, and international services. Volunteers constitute 90 percent of the total Red Cross workforce.

<http://www.redcross.org/what-we-do>

For more than 100 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters has operated under the belief that inherent in every child is the ability to succeed and thrive in life. As the nation's largest donor and volunteer supported mentoring network, the organization makes meaningful, monitored matches between adult volunteers and children, ages 6 through 18, in communities across the country. It develops positive relationships that have a direct and lasting effect on the lives of young people.

http://www.bbbs.org/site/c.9iILI3NGKhK6F/b.5962351/k.42EB/We_are_here_to_start_something.htm

Conceived during John F. Kennedy's presidency, Senior Corps currently links more than 360,000 Americans 55 and older to service opportunities. Their contributions of skills, knowledge, and experience make a real difference to individuals, nonprofits, and faith-based and other community organizations throughout the United States. Volunteers receive guidance and training so they can make a contribution that suits their talents, interests, and availability.

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/senior-corps>

The Department of Defense values those who volunteer. One of the ways it demonstrates this is by honoring distinguished volunteers with the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal. The medal was authorized in 1993 to members of the U.S. Armed Forces and Reserve components and is awarded for outstanding and sustained voluntary service to the civilian community.

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2008-title32-vol3/xml/CFR-2008-title32-vol3-sec578-36.xml>

On January 30, 1948, Mohandas Gandhi, the political and spiritual leader of the Indian independence movement, was assassinated. During a vigil in New Delhi—part of Gandhi’s effort to end India’s religious strife—a Hindu extremist who objected to his tolerance for Muslims fatally shot him. Known as Mahatma, or “the great soul,” Gandhi’s persuasive methods of civil disobedience influenced leaders of civil rights movements around the world, especially Martin Luther King Jr. in the United States.
<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/gandhi-assassinated>

Founded in 1969, the National Military Family Association focuses on issues important to military families. Based on the belief that all military families deserve comprehensive child care, accessible health care, spouse employment options, great schools, caring communities, a secure retirement, and support for widows and widowers, its mission is to fight for benefits and programs that strengthen and protect military families and reflect the nation’s respect for their service.
<http://www.militaryfamily.org/about-us/>

The volunteer rates for both men and women—22.0 and 28.3 percent, respectively—changed little in the year ending in September 2014. Women continued to volunteer at a higher rate than did men across all age groups, educational levels, and other major demographic characteristics. By age, 35- to 44-year-olds were most likely to volunteer, at 29.8 percent. Volunteer rates were lowest among 20- to 24-year-olds, with 18.7 percent. For persons 45 and over, the volunteer rate tapered off as age increased. Teens aged 16 to 19 had a volunteer rate of 26.1 percent.
<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.nr0.htm>

The Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund serves U.S. military personnel wounded or injured in service to our nation, and their families. Supporting these heroes helps repay the debt all Americans owe them for the sacrifices they have made in service to our nation. They are, in the words of IFHF founder, the late Zachary Fisher, “our nation’s greatest national resource,” and they deserve all the help that our nation can provide. The IFHF is a leader in meeting this important national mission.

<http://fallenheroesfund.org/About-IFHF/Mission-I.aspx>

Fisher House Foundation operates a network of comfort homes near major military and VA medical centers nationwide where military and veterans’ families can stay free while a loved one is receiving treatment. It also operates the Hero Miles program, using donated frequent flyer miles to bring family members to the bedside of injured service members and the Hotels for Heroes program using donated hotel points to allow family members to stay free at hotels near medical centers.

<http://www.fisherhouse.org/about/>

A national nonprofit, Operation Homefront leads more than 2,500 volunteers nationwide who provide emergency and other financial assistance to the families of service members and wounded warriors. Operation Homefront has provided assistance to thousands of military families since its inception in 2002. Nationally, 93 percent of total donations to Operation Homefront go directly to programs that provide support to military families.

<http://www.operationhomefront.net/aboutus>

Over 38,000 veterans, military families, and active duty service members benefited from volunteerism in 2014.

<http://www.volunteer.va.gov/>

AmeriCorps engages more than 75,000 Americans in intensive service each year at nonprofits, schools, public agencies, and community and faith-based groups across the country. Since the program's founding in 1994, more than 900,000 AmeriCorps members have contributed more than 1.2 billion hours in service across America while tackling pressing problems and mobilizing millions of volunteers for the organizations they serve.

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ Americorps>



DEOMI, 2004

Supporting America's troops was the first mission of the United Service Organizations. In 1941, as it became clear that the nation was heading into World War II, several organizations mobilized to support the growing U.S. military. President Franklin D. Roosevelt created synergy among these agencies by forming the USO, with the objective of providing the emotional support the troops needed. Today, the USO continues to lift the spirits of America's troops and their families.

<http://www.uso.org/history.aspx>

Planting seeds of inspiration in our nation's most vulnerable children is what Reading Is Fundamental and a network of more than 400,000 volunteers do. Whether in schools, homeless shelters, or community centers—wherever you find children—RIF volunteers spend countless hours distributing books, staging reading motivation activities, and promoting the importance of literacy in their communities. RIF's highest priority is reaching underserved children from birth to age 8.

<http://www.rif.org/us/about-rif.htm>

Over 140,000 volunteers gave more than 11 million hours in service to America's veterans in 2015. It is impossible to calculate the amount of caring and sharing these VA Volunteer Service (VAVS) volunteers provided to veteran patients. VAVS volunteers are a priceless asset to the nation's veterans and to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Our veterans put everything on the line to protect our freedom. We may never be able to repay them for their sacrifice, but we can show them how much we appreciate all they've done. Everyone can do something to show veterans we appreciate their service. What will you do?

<http://www.volunteer.va.gov/>

President John F. Kennedy came up with the idea for VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America). VISTA has been on the front lines in the fight against poverty in America for more than 45 years. Today, VISTA is larger, stronger, and more vital than it has ever been. Its 8,000 members—who serve at 1,100 projects nationwide—continue to address the root causes of poverty. They are developing new programs, raising funds, helping manage projects, and building the capacity of nonprofit organizations to become sustainable and of families to break the cycle of poverty.

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps/amicorps-vista>

Since President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps by executive order on March 1, 1961, more than 220,000 Americans have served in 140 host countries. Today, almost 7,000 volunteers are working with local communities in 64 host countries. They are serving in agriculture development, community economic development, education, environment, health, and youth in development. The Peace Corps' mission is to promote world peace as well as friendship and a better understanding between Americans and people of other countries.

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/>

It took 15 years to create the federal Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. Congressman John Conyers first introduced legislation for a commemorative holiday four days after King was assassinated in 1968. After the bill stalled, petitions endorsing the holiday containing six million names were submitted to Congress. Public pressure for the holiday mounted during the 1982 and 1983 civil rights marches in Washington. Congress passed the holiday legislation in 1983, and it was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan.

<http://www.archives.gov/eo/special-observances/#jan>

The Big Event is an all-day service event for college students aimed at encouraging them to express their gratitude to the community that supports their university. One Saturday each year, hundreds of college students spend sunrise to sundown engaged in volunteer service projects in their University's town. Since its creation at Texas A&M University in 1982, the Big Event has caught on at universities across the U.S., and is most celebrated at the Florida State University, Virginia Tech, and the University of Nebraska.

<http://bigevent.tamu.edu/about>

Section Photo

<https://www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery.htm?id=B242F16A-1DD8-B71C-07C1A7245408D30E>

Martin Luther King Jr.

Milestones



Martin Luther King Jr. is the first African-American –and the first non-U.S. president- to have an official legal holiday.

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/days-service/martin-luther-king-jr-day-service/about-dr-king-and-mlk-day>

In 1964, at 35 years old, Martin Luther King Jr. became the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize. His acceptance speech in Oslo is thought by many to be among the most powerful remarks ever delivered at the event, climaxing at one point with the oft-quoted phrase “I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right temporarily defeated is stronger than evil triumphant.”

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/about-dr-king>

In January 1986, Mrs. Coretta Scott King oversaw the first legal holiday in honor of her late husband. The Martin Luther King Jr. holiday has come to be celebrated by millions of people in over 100 countries.

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/>

After a long struggle, legislation was signed in 1983 creating a federal holiday marking the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. In 1994, Congress designated the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday as a national day of service. Each year on the third Monday in January, the MLK Day of Service calls for Americans to work together to provide solutions to our most pressing national problems.
www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030115-11.html

In September of 1958, Martin Luther King Jr. was stabbed while signing copies of his latest book on a sidewalk in Harlem, New York. The blade rested on his aorta, the main artery in the body. While recovering in the hospital, King received countless letters from well-wishers. Among them was one that King recalled as the most memorable of the bunch: *"Dear Dr. King, I am a ninth-grade student at the White Plains High School. While it should not matter, I would like to mention that I'm a White girl. I read in the paper of your misfortune, and of your suffering. And I read that if you had sneezed, you would have died. And I'm simply writing you to say that I'm so happy that you didn't sneeze."*
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89336517>

Section Photo

<https://www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery.htm?id=31584FF0-1DD8-B71C-079A6C5F5C2DD592>

Martin Luther King Jr.

Quotes



"My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country."

-President John F. Kennedy

"We have more to do to bring Dr. King's dream within reach of all our daughters and sons. We must stand together for good jobs, fair wages, safe neighborhoods, and quality education. With one voice, we must ensure the scales of justice work equally for all -- considering not only how justice is applied, but also how it is perceived and experienced. As Dr. King told us, 'injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere,' and this remains our great unfinished business."

-President Barack Obama

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only love can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that."

-Martin Luther King Jr.

“I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal.”
-Martin Luther King Jr.

“Those who are equal before God shall now be equal in the polling booths, in the classrooms, in the factories, and in hotels, restaurants, movie theaters, and other places that provide service to the public...let us close the springs of racial poison ...let us lay aside irrelevant differences and make our nation whole.”
-President Lyndon B. Johnson, after the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Martin Luther King Jr." The signature is written in black ink and is centered on the page.

"We have witnessed today in Washington tens of thousands of Americans, both Negro and White, exercising their right to assemble peaceably and direct the widest possible attention to a great national issue. Efforts to secure equal treatment and equal opportunity for all without regard to race, color, creed, or nationality are neither novel nor difficult to understand. What is different today is the intensified and widespread public awareness of the need to move forward in achieving these objectives—objectives which are older than this nation."

-President John F. Kennedy, at the March on Washington

“If any of you are around when I have to meet my day, I don’t want a long funeral. And if you get somebody to deliver the eulogy, tell him not to talk too long...Tell them not to mention that I have a Nobel Prize. That isn’t important. Tell them not to mention that I have three or four hundred other awards. That’s not important. Tell them not to mention where I went to school. I’d like somebody to mention that day, that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to give his life serving others. I’d like for somebody to say that day, that Martin Luther King Jr., tried to love somebody. I want you to say that day that I tried to be right on the war question. I want you to be able to say that day, that I did try to feed the hungry. And I want you to be able to say that I did try in my life to clothe those who were naked. I want you to say on that day, that I did try in my life to visit those who were in prison. I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity.”

-Martin Luther King Jr.

“We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protests to degenerate into physical violence.”

-Martin Luther King Jr., *I Have a Dream*

“I leave you, hoping that the lamp of liberty will burn in your bosoms until there shall no longer be a doubt that all men are created free and equal.”

-Abraham Lincoln

“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”

-Martin Luther King Jr., *I Have a Dream*

“And this reveals to us that the most striking thing about the story of Rip Van Winkle is not merely that Rip slept twenty years, but that he slept through a revolution. While he was peacefully snoring up in the mountain a revolution was taking place that at points would change the course of history—and Rip knew nothing about it. He was asleep. Yes, he slept through a revolution. And one of the great liabilities of life is that all too many people find themselves living amid a great period of social change, and yet they fail to develop the new attitudes, the new mental responses, that the new situation demands. They end up sleeping through a revolution.”

-Martin Luther King Jr.

“Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such creative tension that a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored.”

-Martin Luther King Jr., *Letter from Birmingham Jail*

“We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.”

-Martin Luther King Jr., *Letter from Birmingham Jail*

“We shall overcome because the arch of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.”

-Martin Luther King Jr., *We Shall Overcome*

“I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up, live out the true meaning of its creed: “*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.*”

-Martin Luther King Jr., *I Have a Dream*

“Let us rise up tonight with a greater readiness. Let us stand with a greater determination. And let us move on in these powerful days, these days of challenge to make America what it ought to be. We have an opportunity to make America a better nation.”

-Martin Luther King Jr., *I Have Been to the Mountaintop*

“I just referred to the creation of tension as a part of the work of the non-violent register. This may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word tension. I have earnestly worked and preached against violent tension, but there is a type of constructive nonviolent tension that is necessary for growth.”

-Martin Luther King Jr., *Letter from Birmingham Jail*

“In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking it from the cup of bitterness and hatred.”

-Martin Luther King Jr., *I Have a Dream*

“Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi, from every mountain side. Let freedom ring...”

-Martin Luther King Jr., *I Have a Dream*

Section Photo

<https://www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery.htm?id=313AF650-1DD8-B71C-07476509DBD56534>
