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Martin Luther King Jr. essay and scholarship winners

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Written by Vickki Dozier

ESSAY WINNERS

First place: Corbin Sickles, seventh grade, Waverly Middle School

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is a name we all recognize as a hero.

Aside from being one of the most inspiring preachers in the history of the earth, he tried to make our country a better, more peaceful place. Little by little, I'm doing the same.

It may be little things like helping someone who's being bullied because they look different, but it's still helping. I believe I am keeping the same dream Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. kept when he was my age, a teenager, and throughout his entire life.

"The dream for whites and blacks to sit down at the table of brotherhood. The dream that one day people won't be judged by the color of their skins but the content of their character."

I am a dream keeper because I judge people by their character. I am a dream keeper because I help people in need. I am a dream keeper because I treat people how I would like to be treated. I am a dream keeper because every day I make right decisions and become a better person for it. I am a dream keeper because I want the world to

be a better place.

Dr. King was a great man and a great activist, but above all, an amazing leader. He truly captivated and inspired people to take action and do something to help out. He came from a long line of

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Corbin Sickles

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"orators" and may have been the best at what he did. Now I may not be a great orator, but I will do whatever it takes to bring peace and love to mankind.

I am a dream keeper because I want to see the world live in peace. You should become a dream keeper because if people work together, we could actually accomplish Dr. King's dream.

Second place: Eliyahan Yahsha, sixth grade, El Shabazz

A dream maker is a person who keeps a dream alive such as Dr. King. Dr. King was a dream keeper because no matter what happened, he kept his dream alive. I am a dream keeper because I help keep Dr. King's dream alive because I show the act of peace. I value others. I strive for the best.

To begin, being a good student means turning in your work on time and respecting your teacher. I am a dream keeper because I go to school, as Dr. King wanted us to do. Five hundred years ago, if African Americans were caught learning how to read, we would be lynched. It was felt that if we knew how to read or write that we would overpower our masters. This is why we must take this opportunity to get a valuable education!

Next, I value others. I volunteer my time as a safety patrol. I help by giving to those less fortunate than I. During Thanksgiving, I volunteered at the homeless shelter. I gave

canned goods at school for those who have less than I. This relates to being a dream keeper.

To strive for the best means to settle for nothing less! The best relates to being a dream maker, because dream makers like Dr. King would settle for nothing less. An example of striving for the best is President Obama. Dr. King said he dreams that we would have a black president. When President Obama ran for president, he strived for nothing less than the best. Death threats did not stop him from running for president. Like Dr. King and President Obama, I am a dream keeper because I want nothing less than the best.

I am a dream keeper because I demonstrate peace. I do not fight students at school. Dr. King demonstrated peace because he used his voice instead of violence. As Dr. King says, "Violence solves

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nothing at all! Violence does nothing! It causes more blood shed!"

Other people should be dream keepers because Dr. King gave his life so there would not be any more segregation. He gave his life fighting for a quality education for African Americans! He shed his blood for African Americans to be equal in the world.

I am a dream keeper! I do not look at people's skin color, I look at their character.

Third place: Camryn Turner, seventh grade, Waverly Middle School

Equality was unheard of in the 1930s. Though all were created equally, all weren't treated equally. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was an activist; he fought for equality until his death. From boycotts to his many famous speeches he showed power and let no one walk over him, his power led to equal rights for all races. His work impacted many lives, but though he no longer lives, his legacy lives on. I keep Dr. King's legacy and dreams alive because I am a dream keeper.

"I have a dream." These words were spoken by Dr. King on Aug. 28, 1963, at the Lincoln Memorial; this speech motivated thousands and changed hundreds. I am a dream keeper because I always try to use my words to motivate others to do right and stand up against injustices. I do not put down others but try to see the good in every situation and everybody, just like Dr. King. Dr. King saw through everything negative that came his way. He was a very positive man. I look up to Dr. King; he was a courageous man and without his bravery I would not be in the position I'm in today. I show thanks to Dr. King everyday through my actions.

"Returning violence with violence multiplies violence; adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars," Dr. King stated. To me this quote means that violence leads to nowhere, so why try fighting violence with violence? Dr. King stood against violence but fought with inspiring words. I despise violence and try to avoid conflicts. If I see a fight about to arise I go and get help immediately. Without violence our world would be a better and safer place.

Hope was a part of Dr. King's life. He never stopped believing, and even today we are reminded of his hope. Dr. King's memorial in Washington, D.C., reminds people that the world has come far but still has a long way to go. His memorial is called the Stone Of Hope, representing his efforts to never give up.

I vow to keep hope just as Dr. King did. I will always believe that everyone is created equally. I will keep Dr. King's messages in my heart and use them to motivate others. I will live out Dr. King's legacy because...I am a dream keeper!

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The father who does not teach his son his duties is equally guilty with the son who neglects them.

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SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS:**Nigel Flanagan, senior, Waverly High School**

Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream that everyone would be treated equally. He fought for the civil rights of people of all races. I have had the privilege of learning more about his legacy through going on a historical tour of important civil rights sites. I try and continue his dream through working with team members on my football and track teams. In school, I do well on my work so that I can continue his dream of all people being educated. I want to use education to make a difference in my own life and the lives of others. I think it is important to continue the dreams of Martin Luther King Jr. in my own life through learning more about the civil rights movement, participating in team activities and by doing well in school.

Unlike most people, I have experienced firsthand a lot of historical sites and historical buildings that were important to the civil rights movement. Last spring I went on a historical black college tour with the group called Y Achievers. We visited many sites in the south. We saw a lot of the sites and places that had significant importance to different civil rights activities. We visited the Civil Rights Museum in Birmingham, Ala. We also visited one of the first schools to be desegregated in Little Rock, Ark. I realized how different my life would be without the civil rights movement and leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and other great leaders. Without the civil rights movement, I would not be graduating with such a diverse group of students.

One of the tenants that Martin Luther King Jr. had was that all people should set aside their differences and to not judge others with the color of their skin but by the contents of their characters. People working together toward a common goal were an important part of Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream. For me, sports are a good example of this because when you are part of a team you have to set aside your differences and work together as one.

In football there are 11 different players on the field and each player has to do their job and work together to make a big play or score for the team. When I have to run relay races in track, I have to practice timing and working together with my teammates. In sports, if members of a team do not work together, then the team is not successful. This is one of the ways that I use Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream of people working together to inspire my life.

Martin Luther King Jr. felt it was important to be educated because education is a tool to help people overcome obstacles in their lives. In his time, schools were segregated. He fought to desegregate schools because he thought that everyone should have an equal education. When I visited the first desegregated school in Arkansas, I saw how large that it was. I realized how hard it was for

Martin Luther King Jr. and other leaders to get that many students and families on board with his vision. In school, I think it is important to learn and study to get good grades. It is important because education is a way for me to make a better life and for me to learn more about myself. Once I complete my education, I will be able to help people and give back to my community even more than I do now. These are all of the reasons that Martin Luther King Jr. felt education was important.

Martin Luther King Jr. volunteered his own time to get more civil rights for others; this was often not easy for him. I am a dream keeper and Martin Luther King Jr. has inspired me to volunteer in my community. Since the beginning of this year, I have packed sack lunches for people who otherwise could not afford to eat lunch. I have also worked with Volunteers of America serving meals and washing dishes. I helped feed the poor by working with the Capitol Area United Way on various projects. Last year I tutored a struggling reader by being a mentor, teaching, talking and just spending time with a fifth grader than needed help and attention. It is important for me to volunteer and give back because I have been blessed with having all of the things that I need in my life. Some people have not.

I feel a responsibility to give back because of all of the things that I have and experiences that I have been blessed with. Martin Luther King Jr. helped inspire me to do this through the work that he did for people who were in need of help.

It would be an honor to be considered for this scholarship because Martin Luther King Jr. is an icon to me. I look to him as a great leader. I aspire to help others as Martin Luther King Jr., did. An education will help me to reach those aspirations. I plan to go to school for engineering at Central State University. I chose this school because I want to identify more with my heritage while earning a degree that will help me to make a difference for others. Engineering helps people by creating goods and services that can make their lives better. Martin Luther King Jr. spent his life trying to improve the quality of life for all people and I aspire to do the same. I am a dream keeper everyday when I work hard in school, go into college to be the best that I can be, and work together with others to make this world a better place.

Alison Schlicker, senior, Dansville High School

When asked what I want to do with my life, I have a very sure answer that usually surprises most people. Since the time I was seven, I have wanted to attend Martin Luther College to be a Lutheran Elementary School Teacher.

I attended Memorial Lutheran School from kindergarten through eighth grade. I have been encouraged by many former teachers,

but most inspired by Mrs. Domke, my third and fourth grade teacher. Through her I have seen love and compassion given to each individual student; and that instilled the desire in me to do the same. I believe that the best job is to be able to spread the good news about Jesus, while doing something I love to do, teach.

While I'm working to achieve my dreams, I also help others achieve their dreams as well. I am currently a tutor to a third grade student at Dansville Elementary School. I have given that third grade student's parents hope, for I am helping in a way that they are unable. They no longer have to worry about their child passing third grade, as I am giving her the extra help and skills she needs to thrive and become a well organized individual.

I have been a third to fourth grade Sunday school teacher at Memorial Lutheran Church for the past two years. I get nothing but the joy in seeing these students grow in their overall knowledge in return.

I have also coached a fifth through eighth grade Basketball team. My goal was to help those girls become better basketball players so that maybe someday they would have a chance to follow their dreams of being a professional athlete. While I know this is a very hard dream to keep, I always encouraged them to do their best and supported their dreams.

I also participate in the food drives in my high school and help deliver food to those families that are less fortunate than others. The thanks and gratitude on their smiling faces lets me know that I have helped them with their dream of providing for their families and helped give them and their children a better life.

I participate in many extracurricular activities, including being an officer in Student Council, National Honors Society, and Class of 2012. I have also been a four-year participant in Drama Club and Varsity Softball. I have done all of this and more while striving for excellence in all I do, by maintaining a 3.9 GPA. I have recently been accepted to Martin Luther College, and although its 12 hours away from home, I am very excited to follow my dreams to achieve my career goal of being a Lutheran Elementary School Teacher.

I believe that I should be considered for this scholarship because while I am working to keep other people's dreams alive, I have also worked towards keeping mine alive. Just as MLK's dream was to help others, this scholarship will enable me to pursue my dream of helping others.

Talia Thomas, senior, Waverly High School

In the not so distant past, God blessed America and the entire world with a simple gift, a dream. This dream was planted within a strong man who was willing, and ultimately died for this dream. He

shared what this dream was, "For America to finally live up to the true meaning of its creed, that all men are created equal."

Looking at the past, life in America for many had been a nightmare thwarting all of our dreams and hopes off. Snared by enslavement, murder, rape, and constant fear, the dream was laid to rest. As we fast forward to today, most unanimously agree that this dream was basic, and that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. should not have had to sacrifice his life before his dream was realized. However, we have become complacent in recent years. We are no longer dreaming. In effort to be politically correct, we strive to ignore differences instead of recognizing and appreciating them, thus effectively walking around with our eyes wide shut!

Dr. King did not dream in black and white, he dreamed in color. We dream keepers must not become complacent in our efforts to keep Dr. King's dream alive, we must continue to challenge ourselves to expand upon his ideals in order to move this nation forward. America, home to the great bald eagle, is a national symbol. As it soars high above in confidence, its beauty, strength and wisdom represent limitless possibilities. A famous 20th century poet Langston Hughes wrote a poem on dreams that tie into the creatures of flight. He said, "Hold fast to your dreams, for when they die, life is a broken winged bird that cannot fly." Sadly, when we quit dreaming we are reduced to that broken winged bird thwarted of our potential.

We as a people need to wake up and keep dreaming! Each day we must ask ourselves, are you a dream keeper or are you merely asleep?

Even in current bleak economic times, America has become stagnant. Society beckons all dream keepers to step forward to reveal their revelation on how to pull America out of its depths of gloom. Abraham Lincoln once said, "The best thing about the future is that it comes only one day at a time." We must expound upon the dreams our forefathers set in place for us to live out. We must continue on what our distant relatives preyed upon and consequently lost their lives over. We must continue the groundwork Dr. Martin Luther King laid out for us and lost his life in the process as well. When we think that we have achieved all of our dreams and goals we must then continue to push forward to create new aspirations. As we plunge forward we must remember to reach back and pull those lagging behind along with us.

As a dream keeper, I know that it is up to me to live out my dreams, and make the most of my life, and to change the world one day at a time. Just as the American eagle soars high above, set your dreams high and you too will ascend. Share your dreams with others to help them to grow, develop and to become a reality. Finally, challenge yourself to be a dream keeper, one that is fully

awake!

I think that I should be considered for this scholarship because I try to embrace Dr. King's dream each day. Dr. King loved me enough to fight the battle of blatant racisms and injustices that existed long before I was an inkling. The least thing that I can do to repay the debt is to carry out the foundations and principles he paved in my daily life. By getting a good education, actively participating in my community, and being a good citizen, I too can be a part of the dream legacy that Dr. King essentially lost his life over. Yes, they killed the dreamer, but certainly not the dream. The dream lives on inside of me.

Alexis Watt, senior, East Lansing High School

For as long as I can remember, I've been a dreamer. As a little girl, I dreamed of being a princess, to live in a castle. As a child, I dreamed of becoming a famous singer and actress. To perform on Broadway, to see my name in lights. Now, as a young woman, I dream of many things. I dream of overcoming obstacles, I dream of going above and beyond what is expected of me. I dream of setting an example for many generations to come. But most importantly, I dream of changing the world.

Mahatma Gandhi once said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Ever since I was a little girl I've always been very interested in helping others. Whether it was helping my mother clean up around the house or helping my grandmother make spaghetti, helping people from a young age has carried over to my teenage years. Through organizations that I am involved in at school like Black Student Union, Students Against Drunk Driving, and Key Club, I have had the opportunity to volunteer my time at The Salvation Army, The Ronald McDonald House, and Sparrow Hospital to name a few.

As a member of The Les Meres et Debutantes Club of Greater Lansing, I am required to accumulate a minimum of 12 hours of community service every fiscal year. Ever since I joined Debutantes in 2008, I have earned over 500 hours of community service, allowing me to win the President's Gold Volunteer Service Award on more than one occasion. Through my membership in this club I have been able to volunteer for organizations such as The Boys and Girls Club, Jasmine Miles Memorial Foundation, Lansing Crop Walk, and Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. I've also hosted the Governor's Annual Christmas party as well as the Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Luncheon. With my experience in serving my community and aiding others, I have begun to find myself.

I believe I am a worthy candidate for this scholarship because I don't do community service just because it looks good on college applications or because I feel obligated to do so. I volunteer my

time because I truly believe that being an active member of my community is the first step to changing the world. I plan on making a difference in the lives of others by being a positive influence and leading by example. I believe that it is the responsibility of today's youth to keep the dream of our ancestors alive and to keep dreaming themselves. The main goal I have for my life is to have a major impact on someone. I believe that receiving this scholarship will help me achieve the goals I have set for my life. Receiving this scholarship would greatly help me offset the costs of going to college, because furthering my education is the first and most important step to changing lives. I have been given so much and as a result, I know it is my duty to continue to give back to my community.

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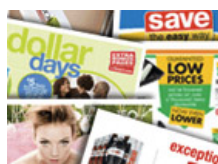
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