

## Second Place. MLK Essay Contest 2020



### Hate Cannot Drive Out Hate

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"Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that." These words, spoken by Martin Luther King Jr. during his acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize, helped give this country a glimmer of hope through the injustices of segregation, oppression, and racism.

His message advocates for people to take small actions of justice to rid their communities of hate.

I recently came to understand the meaning of Martin Luther King's words after the school shooting at Stoneman Douglass High School. Rather than fostering hate, our community rallied around one another with love. It felt like we had the support of

Martin Luther King on our side, as we walked out of class to protest our nation's epidemic of gun violence and mass shootings. Our school walkout paralleled the civil rights marches Martin Luther King organized more than a half-century ago, showing his mission still resonates with some people today.

My greatest goal in life is to use my future positions of leadership and expertise to support other students in my community. For example, I am a student mentor for the LIFE Program, which is an organization that teaches students STEM through hands-on activities. Our program serves aspiring students at local Title I schools and hopes to strengthen the community by mitigating the education and achievement gaps.

Through my involvement in student government, peer mentorship programs, and educational policy I have already seen myself begin to implement small fragments of my goal. But with your support, I know we can give all students the opportunity they deserve.

Although MLK is no longer here, his message does not have to die. I urge **YOU** to become the change you wish to see in the world by reshaping your communities through compassion and love. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

In our lives, we constantly encounter prejudice and injustices, but we must have the courage to use our inner light and faith in the lord to drive out the darkness. As Dr. King said, "Even if we cannot do great things, we can do small things in a great way."

I encourage all of you to reach out to members of your community and to become the light that guides them. Our actions do not have to be large and grandiose, but rather a simple act of kindness can go a long way.

For example, if you were to help three people, and those three people each helped three more, by ten cycles you would have served more than 50,000 people.

Although I am proud of all the progress Martin Luther King Jr. made, it is our duty to continue his mission and to fight against new issues that plague our country.

Please join me in my mission to create change and reshape our communities.