

# Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: The Man and The Mission

*Editor's Note: The Dallas Post agreed to publish three Lake-Lehman High School student essays judged best by the school. Jennifer Chulick was presented with a \$50 prize for having the best essay. The title above was taken from Kayla Culver's essay.*

By JENNIFER CHULICK

"Here on the pulse of this new day/You may have the grace to look up and out/And into your sister's eyes, into/Your brother's face, your country/And say simply/Very simply/With hope/Good Morning" (Angelou).

This quote from Maya Angelou's Inaugural Poem "The Rock Cries Out to us Today" expresses the importance of beginning the world anew. There is always hope for a new life; the only way to start is to begin gradually. That is what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. did to gain rights for African Americans and change the world at the same time. He knew change needed to take place and began slowly. He gained many followers throughout his lifetime that united in peace and love to accomplish one goal: equality. But, the message of Martin Luther King is lost in the back of minds driven by capitalism and materialism.

Martin Luther King would look on the world today and feel frustrated that his message of peace and unity is lost, and people in the world are misguided in a maze of selfishness. In today's society people hide behind the

facade of capitalism and materialism to show how the United States has progressed. People worship money and the "stuff" it buys. Some struggle all their lives to reach the highest position in a company, not for the pride of personal accomplishment, but for a false sense of self-worth and personal happiness.

Somehow in the battle for positions and titles King's name has been forgotten as the man who helped African Americans gain rights and equality. "Progress is a disease" (e.e. cummings) that hypnotizes people into believing self-worth and happiness are judged by wealth and possessions. Selfishness enters and people care only for themselves and nothing of hurting the feelings of someone else. It is painful to hear 5 and 6-year-old children calling each other rude, painful names knowing they will hurt someone's feelings. After people are stripped of what they take for granted, do they then realize the true value of it. This occurred when two airplanes crashed into the Twin Towers. Along with the collapse of the Towers was the collapse of the nation's egotism, and fear

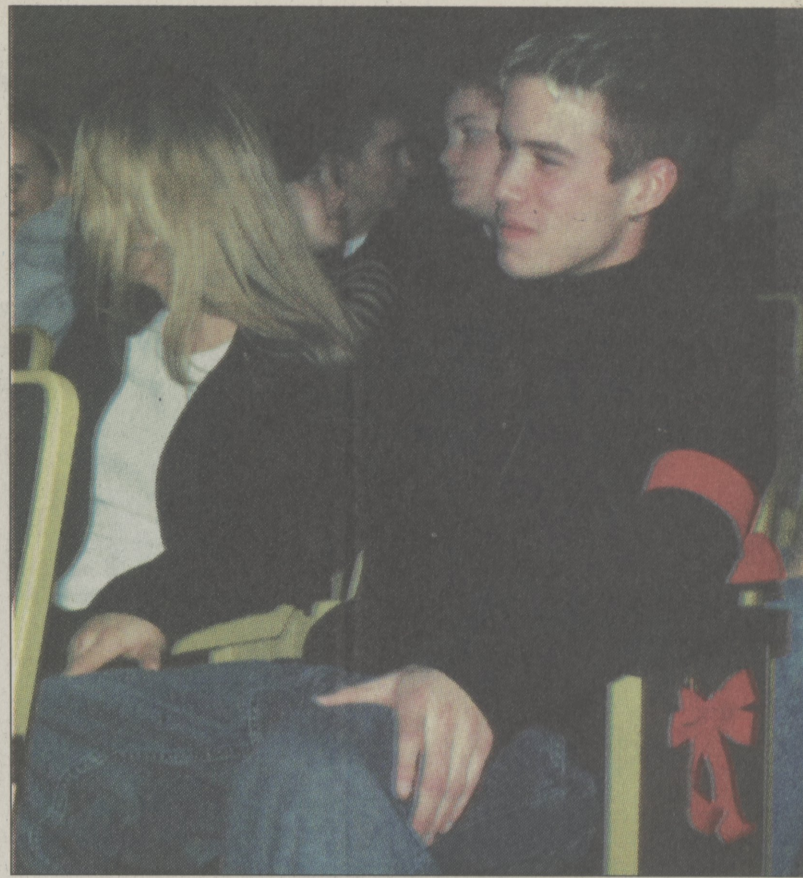
began to reign. This fear leads to racism and hate when people need to hurt others to make themselves feel safe. This attack on the symbols of American capitalism shows people everywhere that material objects do not last, only the feelings of pride in each other and their country can bring a nation together.

King was one man with a powerful message; he changed dramatically the lives of not only African American men and women, but also men and women of all nationalities, races, and creeds. He created a dream, acted on the dream, and transformed the world. Unfortunately when King died no one continued where he left off. Because there is no segregation and women have rights the world is not finished fulfilling the dream of Martin Luther King. There are still discrimination, hate crimes, and Ku Klux Klan activities. The reality that King would not be proud of the world today is a bitter draught to swallow. Yet who can really say this country and this life are better than any other when you cannot even remember the last time you did not judge someone for the way they look instead of who they are.

However, not everything about America would sadden Martin Luther King if he were alive to

day. Young children in elementary school learn the importance of his message and his pictures line the hallways outside the classrooms. With the September 11th attacks people around the world have united in ways they never have before. There is a new pride in the country and a renewed urgency to aid those in need. King said in his "Where Do We Go From Here?" speech, "What I'm trying to get you to see this morning is that a man may be self-centered in his self-denial and self-righteous in his self-sacrifice. His generosity may feed his ego, and his piety may feed his pride. So without love, benevolence becomes egotism, and martyrdom becomes a spiritual pride" (King). It is wonderful to be generous and help those in need, but do not do it to feed your ego and put it up for a prize on you mantle to display.

Martin Luther King's message is echoed in the lyrics of popular contemporary singer Jewel: "Lend our voices only to sounds of freedom/No longer lend our strength to that which we wish to be free from/Fill your lives with love and bravery/And we shall lead a life uncommon" (Kilcher). Do not make King's life and struggles seem in vain — he fought for blacks, he fought for whites, and he fought for you.



POST PHOTO/TIMOTHY RAUB

Chris Kabosky was one of the segregated students during Lake-Lehman High School's observation of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Identified by red ribbons, those students faced discrimination throughout the day.

## Discrimination

(continued from page 1)

through the day at an assembly in front of the entire student body.

"I felt like I didn't exist," said Erin Loughney, one of the students who chose to take part in the exercise. "I could not wait for three o'clock, because I know this would all be over then, but for other people that go through this every day of their lives, they can't take off their ribbon, or change their color."

Loughney went on to tell of her experience when attempting to use the lavatory. She said she and another student had to wait about 20 minutes to get a key for the locked girl's lavatory designated for ribbon use, because they were ignored by the faculty.

The diversity club was started by Nickalls, Prescott and Dodson as part of their senior project. Since its inception, the club has grown to 100 members, becoming the largest at the school.

"We wanted to show what Lake-Lehman would be like if it were segregated," said Prescott. "Everything seemed to be a success."

Joseph Dombroski, an English teacher at the high school, advised Nickalls, Dodson and Prescott for the project, and hoped it would enlighten the students of Lake-Lehman to what is going on around the country, and around the world.

"(The club) brings a lot of the students that constitute the population of Lake-Lehman High School to diversity awareness," said Dombroski. "Since there is not a lot of diversity in this school, the girls thought that it

"King's ideas and philosophies are still alive today, even though he is not."

Kayla Culver  
Lake-Lehman student

would be a good idea to start the first awareness club along with celebrating the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr."

The day was highlighted with a speech by associate minister James Breese of Mount Zion Baptist Church in Wilkes-Barre.

Breese stressed the importance of an exercise like the one the girls coordinated, and said it was something all schools in the Wyoming Valley should use as a format in educating students about the effects of discrimination, and as a way to celebrate the life of Dr. King.

"This program was something that you don't see at many schools," said Breese. "The students were upfront, honest and sincere about the day, and how they were treated. It is a great thing to be able to see a school do something like this."

Lehman students Kayla Culver, Austin Williams and Jen Chulick were also chosen to read their essays "What would King think of America if he were alive today."

"King's ideas and philosophies are still alive today, even though he is not," said Culver in her essay.

By AUSTIN WILLIAMS

I believe Dr. King would like some things about our country, and yet dislike some things. At the time of Dr. King's crusades of peaceful protests and love for enemies, minorities and African-Americans in general, were segregated from the white society. Nevertheless, being a minister, Dr. King stood inside moral boundaries, and did not act violently against those people who were violent to him. This is what he would want to see in America if he were alive today.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. relied on his faith to help sustain him through the mockery, an fear for his life that an African-American leader of his time lived through every day. He quoted the Bible, "And Jesus said, 'But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good for them that hate you...'" (Matthew 5:44). Dr King would definitely say Americans need to "...turn the other cheek," or take criticism a lot better, thus creating a more loving and caring society.

Dr King, in his simulated visit

*"Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is a person I admire greatly, not because of anything he did for himself, but for what he did for others."*

Austin Williams

to America, would love to see the intermingling of not just African-Americans and whites, but those from all walks of life. He would be a strong voice and protector of the innocent Muslim-American population, in the aftermath of our recent tragedy. As Americans, we still have to work at creating a greater toleration of others who may be different. We need to accept others' differences, and love individuals for who they are. When we look at those individuals who have made an impact on our society, many of them are minorities. Dr. King would be fond of the fact that our government, sports teams and other influential institutions in our society are diverse. This would be one of Dr. King's most satisfying observations about America today.

"If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep

the streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the host of heaven and earth will pause to say, here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well." Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., quoted here in one of his many motivational speeches, taught our great country, and even our great world, what it is to be honorable. The lack of diversity in our schools and communities should not deter us from understanding Dr. King's message of peace. Dr. King stood for what he believed in even in the face of adversity. He was the best man he could have possibly been under the oppression of brutal racism. Dr. King would say we need to be the best person we could possibly be, even if we feel insignificant in what we are doing. We

should put maximum effort and determination into whatever is set before us, do the best job we possibly can, and unexpected outcomes are sure to find their way into our lives. Just a few determined people working together, side by side, to the best of their ability, could in fact change our community, thus making our world a better place to live.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is a person I admire greatly, not because of anything he did for himself, but for what he did for others. Changing the shape of America's face forever, we should honor everyday the accomplishments of this great civil rights leader, American author and American hero. Although he was fighting against the ignorance, he still blessed his enemies, and respected them. If we could only be half the person that Dr. King was, this world would be full of peace and prosperity for all. Let us take the challenges he gives us, and live our lives to the fullest everyday. Divided we will certainly fall, but unity will bring peace, love and prosperity to all.

other hand disagree. I firmly believe that it was one ignorant and racist man by the name of James Earl Ray who put an end to King's life. King's philosophies and dreams are still alive today even though he is not.

When King was shot his supporters refused to let his theories die with the rest of him. However, the reality in today's society is a far cry from what it was in King's day. I hope, and I'm sure the majority of the rest of the world hopes, that someday, sooner rather than later, people of all races will unite and fulfill the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King.

In his famous "I Have a

By KAYLA M. CULVER

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would be extremely disheartened by the state of racial affairs in today's society. The respect and equality for which he hoped and worked for has yet to be realized in our country. People will always continue to fear that which is different.

It was King who said "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." He spoke those very words fighting for a cause which killed him over 35 years ago. It is unsettling to think that times and attitudes have yet to budge at the thought of diversity; however, there is still a vast hope that times will change.

### Sarah Podehl named to Temple fall dean's list

Sarah Podehl, a second year student at Temple University's Pharmacy School was named to the Dean's List for the 2002 fall semester with a GPA of 3.67. She is a member of Lambda Kappa Sigma sorority. Her parents are Ned and Betsy Podehl of Dallas.

### Sutton named to DeSales University dean's list

Nicole Sutton, of Dallas, has been named to the DeSales University Fall 2001 Dean's List. Sutton is an accounting major. Students named to the Dean's List in recognition of academic excellence in their course work and a grade point average of 3.25 or above.

### Carlson named to Westminster dean's list

Paul Carlson son of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Carlson, Shavertown, has been named to the Dean's List at Westminster College for the Fall 2001 Semester. Carlson is a molecular biology major and a graduate of Dallas High School.

### DeFrain named to Geneva College dean's list

Rebecca DeFrain, of Sweet Valley, has been named to the Dean's List for the fall of 2001 at Geneva College. Dean's List status is awarded to students who earn a 3.6 grade point average or better.

DeFrain is a freshman at Geneva majoring in business. She is the daughter of Cheryl DeFrain.

### Foster graduates from Lehigh University

Joan Foster of Dallas was one of 171 undergraduates and 233 graduate students to receive a diploma during graduation exercises at Lehigh University recently.

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