

SECOND PLACE

Tenisha Person
East Stroudsburg North High School, 11th Grade

(Untitled Essay)

“I have a dream that one day, right here in Alabama little black boys and little black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and little white girls as brothers and sisters. I have a dream today!” - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

A dream of this was prayed for, a dream of this was hoped for, a dream of this was even cried for. Millions of blacks, even sometimes whites, all over dreamed. Born January 15, 1929, Martin Luther King Jr. was born into a world of hatred, war and racism. As a strong black man, Dr. King decided that it was time for a change; one day, justice will be brought to America. Blacks needed Martin L. King Jr.; but most of all, America needed him, for the change he brought, for the passage of equality and freedom that was dawned on us.

Dr. King was a civil rights leader since 1955. He believed in equality for everyone, disregarding one's race, ethnicity or religion. Around this time, there were big discrimination issues towards blacks in America. People believed that the color of a person's skin determined how they were treated, what bathroom they used, even what school they were allowed to attend. Blacks all over America were treated as if they were less human than whites. Dr. King felt this was a sin and decided to turn things around. Even though blacks were abused, both mentally and physically, King fought back in a nonviolent way. He felt two wrongs didn't make a right. Dr. King had a lot of negative feedback from whites and blacks, most disagreed. Even with this being said, he decided

he would fight for what he believed was right. No matter what it took, he would do it in a nonviolent manner.

Dr. Martin Luther King researched, and read books and speeches by some of the greatest peace activists known, Mahatma Gandhi being one. Gandhi greatly believed in nonviolence and convinced his people it was the right way. Gandhi was one of the greatest influences to King. They both believed that it could be “war with out violence.”- Mahatma Gandhi

I feel Dr. Martin Luther King was a notorious leader, who gave his life in the name of freedom. Of course others disagree. Even though King basically lived in the heart of danger, he still rose and replied, “I will not stop until the bells of freedom ring.” Dr. King accepted the flaws of America, not because he agreed, but because in everything, the first step in healing a wound is to figure out its cure. That is what he did.

I believe that everyone is prejudiced in one way or another, whether it's rich vs. poor, blacks vs. whites, or gays vs. straight. I also believe people are not automatically born that way; I think it is influenced by society, people around, and how they conduct themselves today. I wonder, when will Americans enter the dream of equality and leave the nightmare of racism and violence in the past? When will we realize, “Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.” This quote was said by Dr. King himself. It's time to demand peace in our communities, schools, and homes. Do you hear the bells, because I do!