



Community News & Notes

Martin Luther King Day Is Day Of Action

(NAPSA)—This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Martin Luther King national holiday. For many Americans, the occasion isn't just a day off—it's also a day on—a day of service to honor Dr. King's legacy. On January 16, citizens in every state will spend the day tutoring children, building homes, cleaning parks, painting classrooms, delivering meals, and performing countless other acts of service.

In 1994, Congress passed the King Holiday and Service Act to encourage Americans to volunteer as an appropriate way to honor the memory of Dr. King. At the time of its passage, Coretta Scott King said, "The greatest birthday gift my husband could receive is if people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds celebrated the holiday by performing individual acts of kindness through service to others." And each year since then, hundreds of thousands of people across the United States have honored Dr. King's life and legacy through community service.

This year the holiday will be made even more meaningful as many remember the late civil rights hero Rosa Parks. In 1955, during the height of segregation in America, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a public bus. Her single act of civil disobedience helped fuel an entire civil rights movement and a new way of thinking and behaving in the United States.

The King Holiday will also be a time for millions to reflect on the racial and social divides made more apparent by Hurricane Katrina. The storm exposed levels of abject poverty that many did not



For hundreds of thousands, Martin Luther King Day is a day of community service.

know still existed in America.

"Service is a way to bridge some of those differences and build common bonds," said David Eisner, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, which has led the effort to transform the holiday into a day of service. "It doesn't matter if you're rich or poor, young or old, fully abled or not. As Dr. King once said, 'Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve.' Everyone should take advantage of the opportunity this January 16 to demonstrate their greatness."

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service is sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that administers Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America, and The King Center. To learn how you can become involved with projects in your area or for help designing a project, visit www.mlkday.gov.