



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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DC YOUTH CLAIM KING AS INTERFAITH HERO

WASHINGTON DC, January 9, 2009. DC Youth plan to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with a day of interfaith service, which President-elect Obama has been invited to attend. On January 19th, more than 200 volunteers of many faiths will come together to plant trees, clean up the Anacostia River and engage in interfaith dialogue. As conflict escalates overseas, this day will provide a picture of the best America has to offer: citizens from different backgrounds coming together to create common action for the common good, following the legacy of an American hero.

The day will start with an interfaith service project led by **Earth Conservation Corps (ECC)** from 9 am to noon, followed by an interfaith dialogue over lunch from noon to 1:30 pm. At 1:30 pm, free transportation will take volunteers to the **Washington National Cathedral** for the "Continuing the Dream of Dr. King" Youth Celebration from 2-4 pm. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is well-known for his non-violent activism, but he also left an equally profound legacy of interfaith action. He drew inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi, and marched in Selma with Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. King's ultimate vision was not just about race or nation, but new relationships - between people from different backgrounds, between America and the world, between humanity and God. This is the powerful vision that can guide us through the 21st century.

Across the country, young people from different faiths are joining forces to serve their communities. As they get to know one another, they are building relationships and respect, and something bigger than themselves: an interfaith youth movement. On Gandhi Day this year, Eboo Patel, founder and Executive Director of the Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC), gave a speech at Washington National Cathedral highlighting this movement. This kicked off the youth-led planning for this MLK day event, and is just one example of the broader movement. Last year, 60 college campuses hosted trainings on interfaith student leadership, and 50 sites around the country participated in the IFYC campaign "Days of Interfaith Youth Service."

This MLK day of service is organized by the **Unity Walk** organization, which moves us towards a world where we are united rather than divided by our many faiths. In addition to interfaith walks in Washington DC and New York commemorating 9/11, Unity Walk organizes youth-led service projects. The event is supported by the **Points of Light Institute, Interfaith Works and the Institute for Faith & Service.** **Interfaith Youth Core**, a Chicago-based organization that brings religiously diverse young people together to serve others, is also affiliated with the event.

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