



Celebrate the Legacy of
Dr. King
with the 86 FSS Libraries!

“ The holiday must be substantive, must be more than a day of celebration, a day of reflection, a day of teaching and strategy, a day of getting involved in social and economic programs.
- Coretta Scott King

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ive back and carry forward the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with the 86 FSS Libraries! Celebrated the third Monday of each January, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is the only national federal holiday observed as a day of service, encouraging all Americans to volunteer in their communities to honor Dr. King’s legacy fighting for systemic change and racial equality. The bill to create a federal holiday celebrating the civil rights icon--the first private citizen honored in that way--failed each time it was brought to the floor starting just four days after King’s death. Finally signed into law in 1983, the first federal holiday commemorating Dr. King was celebrated in 1986; it wasn’t until 2000 that every state recognized the holiday.

The grandson of an enslaved person on his father’s side and a grandfather born during the Civil War on his mother’s, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. believed in justice through nonviolence to end racial discrimination and segregation. Dr. King staged marches in Birmingham, Selma, and Montgomery in response to the violence shown to African Americans--including children--integrating into institutions they had a constitutional right to access. While today we recognize Dr. King’s unending fight for racial equality and social justice, his efforts were disapproved by a majority of Americans at the time of his assassination at just age 39.

Utilizing nonviolence and the act of protest to bring forward social change, Dr. King advocated for not only the extension of equal rights to African Americans, but also equality of housing, employment, and education. In 1955, as a pastor in Montgomery, Alabama, Dr. King led the first great African American nonviolent demonstration in our present-times: a 382 day bus boycott against segregation; the Supreme Court declared the law unconstitutional in December of 1956. While a peaceful demonstration, throughout the boycott Dr. King’s house was bombed and he was arrested multiple times.

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Newly elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference later that year, Dr. King led an eleven year movement for civil rights; he spoke more than 2500 times, traveled over six million miles, and wrote five books in the fight against racial injustice. The movement included sit-ins, kneel-ins, boycotts, protests, and marches. He wrote “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” which brought attention to the work of African Americans fighting

for legal and economic justice in one of the most segregated cities in the US.

On August 28th, 1963, he organized over 200,000 demonstrators for the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom where he delivered the iconic “I Have a Dream” speech. Dr. King became the youngest man to receive the Nobel Peace Prize at the age of 35 in 1964. In the final years before his death, Dr. King worked to address economic justice, fair wages, and humane working conditions for impoverished Americans; although he was assassinated before the final demonstration he organized: the Poor People’s March on Washington.

Celebrate the legacy of Dr. King with the 86 FSS Libraries this January:

- Dr. King-inspired StoryTime (details posted on Facebook)
- Library displays of available materials to learn more about Dr. King's legacy and the continued fight against racial inequality
- Online Diversify Your Reading curated list of books inspired by Dr. King's work as well as other authors and movements continuing his legacy fighting for rights in the face of oppression, fear, and violence

Suggested Reading:

Adults

The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Available: Ramstein Library

A Call to Conscience: The Landmark Speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Available: Vogelweh Library

The Three Mothers: How the Mothers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm C, and James Baldwin Shaped a Nation

Available as an e-book and audiobook: Libby

Teens

Dear Martin

Available at: Ramstein and Vogelweh Libraries

March: Book 1

Available at: Ramstein and Vogelweh Libraries

Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You

Available: Ramstein and Vogelweh Libraries

Childrens

As Good As Anybody

Available: Vogelweh Library

My Uncle Martin's Big Heart: Martin Luther King Jr. and Abraham Joshua Heschel's Amazing March Toward Freedom

Available: Ramstein Library

A Sweet Smell of Roses

Available: Ramstein Library