

# THE TORCH

## CIVIL RIGHTS TEAM PROJECT NEWSLETTER

December 2008

Newsletter Editor: Brandon Baldwin

### Obama's Election: Is This a Sign of Racial Progress?



*Editor's Note: This is the final installment in a three part series on race in America.*

I was twenty-two years old, enjoying my final week of college, and I guess I wasn't quite ready for my education to be over. There was a book that had always caught my attention in the voting behavior section of the library, and now I finally had the time to read it.

It was the first book I had ever checked out of my college library simply because I

wanted to. On a beautiful day in May, I sat down on the grass and opening *Voting Hopes or Fears?* by Keith Reeves. A few hours later, Reeves's thoughtful work on racial politics had convinced me that I would never live to see the day when the United States would elect a black president. It seemed impossible.

Since the Civil Rights Team Project is a state government program, we do our best to remain apolitical. We think it's foolish for us to offer commentary on politics, but it would be equally foolish not to comment on the recent election of Barack Obama. Regardless of personal politics, the fact that America just elected its first black president is a landmark occasion that deserves our attention in a civil rights newsletter.

And so let us join all the post-election pundits and analysts in analyzing the meaning of Obama's electoral victory. A borderline ubiquitous framing of the issue comes in the form of a question: Is this the beginning of a post-racial America? Is America "over" and "beyond" race?

The mere asking of those questions is in itself problematic. America is no individual agent: it is a diverse nation of millions. It does not think and act like an individual does. You can't really compare America with your Aunt Ida: it's simply too complex.

But even your Aunt Ida is probably too complex to make these sorts of sweeping generalizations: she will never be post-racial. The idea that even an individual can be "over" and "beyond" race is silly. People and racism are much more complicated than that. As convenient as it would be to put people into two simple categories: racist and non-racist, it wouldn't be acknowledging the

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realities of race in America. We are all racist. We are all non-racist. It varies based on time and circumstances, but defies simple categorization. America is no exception.

Nonetheless, many will point to Obama's victory as proof positive evidence that America is now free of racism. This is obviously problematic. It underestimates the obstacles Obama overcame and his incredible electoral accomplishment. While it may be tempting to dismiss race as a factor in an election where the black candidate won, it was a major factor. There are many voters who refused to vote for Obama because of the color of his skin, and many more who voted for Obama in spite of the color of his skin. (Miles Gloriosus, a poster at a NY Times blog, wrote "I'd prefer it if Obama were white, but race isn't everything." This is both horrifying and refreshing at the same time: at least he can acknowledge and overcome his own prejudice.)

But race and racism are so much more than just demographics and attitudes that affect voting behavior. Recent events following Obama's election make it clear that America is hardly post-racial. The months leading up to and following Election Day actually saw an increase in hate incidents and crimes.

There have been well publicized examples in our own state. There is the notorious betting pool in Standish. Effigies hung in Mount Desert. Racist comments made in high schools. The letters KKK written along a walking trail in Hallowell. Swastikas spray-painted on buildings in Portland.

These ugly incidents offer a sharp contrast to the Obama electoral achievement and cast a dark shadow over the giddiness of anyone

proclaiming a new post-racial America. We're not there, but we also shouldn't be so cynical as to dismiss the significance of America's first black president. Many have correctly labeled Obama's election as a symbolic event. This has often been said in a dismissive fashion, implying that it is *merely* a symbolic event.

But we shouldn't dismiss the power of symbols. True, this election doesn't signal the end of racism, but it's an important event. Anyone who watched the election returns on television saw something powerful: for me it was the sight of Jesse Jackson openly crying in the crowd gathered at the Grant Park victory rally. Yes, this was the same Jesse Jackson who made unfortunate comments about castrating Obama only months earlier, but it's also the same Jesse Jackson who was the nation's most prominent black political figure since the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. If anyone knew the significance of Obama's accomplishment, it was Jackson.

But more important than the Jesse Jacksons and Oprah Winfreys and Colin Powells and all the political analysis is the testimonial of an anonymous mother posting on the Racialicious blog:

I was at home with my 17 yr old mixed-race son. He'd accompanied me to the polls at 7 am because he "wanted to be part of this." When Obama's win was announced, he broke down and cried.

I don't mean a tear or two. I mean ten minutes with tears streaming down his face. This is a kid who has an IQ of 149, but when he turned in his first high school English paper

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was asked, “Who helped you write this?”

This is a kid who is deeply sensitive, but for the most part is told that to succeed as a black man, he has to be a “gangsta” who cares only about money, drugs, and sex.

This is a young man who, for the first time in his life, believed that he could be anything. He cried for ten minutes as his heart broke open. I cried with him.

Clearly this is something more than a *mere* symbolic event. All across America there are everyday Americans who own Obama’s electoral victory as their own victory. It’s something bigger than politics; it’s personal. It may not signal a post-racial America, and we may never get there, but it signals progress. Consider the words of Latoya Peterson, editor of the Racialicious blog:

The main work in ending racism lies with us. It lies in acknowledging that problems exist, having honest conversations about race, looking toward solutions, and challenging ourselves and each other on our own inherent biases. This is going to be a messy, ugly process. And small breakthroughs are what fuel us to keep going. Person by person, bit by bit, drop by drop, inch by inch, we are actively moving toward a better future. This is slow going. Anything worth doing takes time and effort, and occasionally we suffer setbacks. But it is important that we keep moving in the right direction.

America electing its first black president sure feels like moving in the direction towards ending racism. Let us all continue with the work.



### LINKS:

The idea of people voting for Obama in spite of his race:

[www.dailykos.com/story/2008/10/6/183337/688/373/622033](http://www.dailykos.com/story/2008/10/6/183337/688/373/622033)

[www.salon.com/opinion/feature/2008/11/03/racists\\_for\\_obama](http://www.salon.com/opinion/feature/2008/11/03/racists_for_obama)

For a look at how Obama could signal a significant shift in race and politics, go to:

[www.nytimes.com/2008/08/10/magazine/10politics-t.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/10/magazine/10politics-t.html)

Teaching Tolerance touches on many of these issues and has come up with some useful activities focusing on Obama’s election and the rash of hateful incidents in response. To access these activities, go to:

[www.tolerance.org/teach/activities/activity.jsp?ar=987&ttnewsletter=ttnewsgen-120408](http://www.tolerance.org/teach/activities/activity.jsp?ar=987&ttnewsletter=ttnewsgen-120408)

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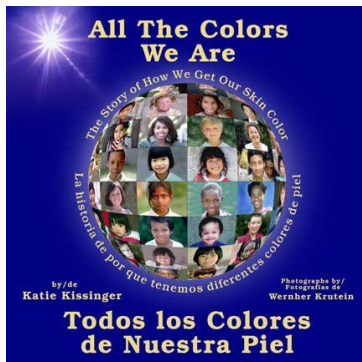
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### Teaching the Concept of Race to Younger Students

Race and skin color can be difficult topics to address with any age group, but especially younger students. Some young students are barely aware of the concept of race. These four books are valuable resources in beginning the important discussions of race with elementary school students. They each address different learning styles, too, so that you can reach as many students as possible and design interesting activities to go with the readings. (Expect an activity on our website soon that utilizes paint chip samples to explore different skin tones and colors.)

#### ***All the Colors We Are*, by Katie Kissinger**

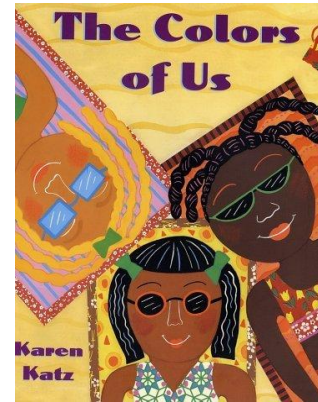
Learning Style: Scientific



Through full-color photography and simple language, *All the Colors We Are* takes the scientific approach in explaining skin color. The book focuses on melanin, the pigment that gives us all different levels of brown coloring in our skin. Kissinger effectively explains that melanin is something we all have in our skin, just at different levels. The end of the book includes numerous activities that pair well with the book's content.

#### ***The Colors of Us*, by Karen Katz**

Learning Style: Artistic



Katz tells the story of Lena, a seven year old learning to mix colors for her artwork. When Lena tells her mother that “brown is brown”, they take a walk around the neighborhood to appreciate the many different colors of people’s skin tones. Lena begins to see all the different colors of the people around her, appreciating the diversity of her neighborhood. The book features beautiful artwork and colorful comparisons of skin color and favorite foods.

#### ***The Skin You Live In*, by Michael Tyler**

Approach: Literary (through extended metaphors)



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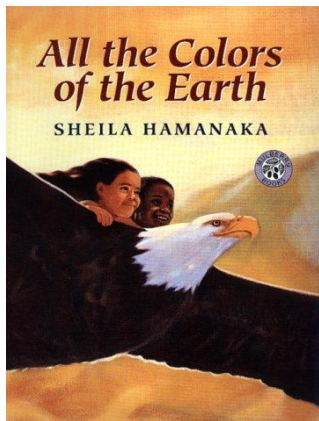
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Through poetry, Tyler points out that skin makes individuals both similar and different at the same time. The rhythmic language of the text makes this an excellent read-aloud, but don't skip over the impressive illustrations. The Nick Jr. website describes this as "an energetically illustrated charmer."

***All the Colors of the Earth*, by Sheila Hamanaka**

Approach: Naturalistic/Environmental



Using elements of nature to explore the differences in the world's people, Hamanaka celebrates the world's diversity. The book is joyous, depicting happy children from around the world. The connecting thread from page to page, person to person, is that everyone is lovable.

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Any one or combination of these books should make for a great launching point for discussions, activities, and lessons about race. We encourage you to find these books and check them out!

## Alas, Poor Bratz, We Hardly Knew Thee



One of the most controversial lines of toys suffered a sudden death on December 3<sup>rd</sup> when Mattel won a court order banning MGA Entertainment from making and selling their popular line of Bratz dolls. A jury earlier found that ex-Barbie designer Carter Bryant came up with the ideas and plans for Bratz while working at Mattel, therefore violating copyright law. The court order ends a long-standing feud between Barbie and the Bratz line, which was first introduced in 2001 and has consistently eroded Barbie's market share of doll sales to young girls.

Many are celebrating the early death of the Bratz line, but the dolls actually had some positive qualities. The Bratz characters are a diverse group. The dolls are ethnic (i.e. non-white) in a vague sort of way. Many of them have skin tones and hair that are apparent products of multi-ethnic identities. They also have ethnically ambiguous names like Cloe, Yasmin, Jade, and Sasha. The Bratz dolls also have a more realistic body image than their main competitor, Barbie. The girls don't appear to be six feet tall and just 100 lbs., with 19 inch waists and FF cup breasts. (For those who don't

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know, these are the stats for Barbie if she were a real human.)

But the Bratz dolls are hardly girl positive role models. While their body image is more realistic than Barbie, their faces look like products of plastic surgery. Their doe eyes, apparent lack of noses, and puffy lips are as unrealistic as Barbie's body. Perhaps more alarming is the total obsession with appearance. The girls are always wearing make-up and outfits that could make Madonna blush. High heels, knee-high boots, fishnet stockings, tight leather pants, cleavage-revealing tops... granted, it's all stuff we see in the media every single day. Just remember that these dolls are marketed towards tweens and early elementary age children.

Bratz dolls are sexualized versions of young girls. Their personalities and interests made them into nothing more than sex objects. The Bratz girls all have an obsession with fashion and boys. They are only interested in how they look. At least different versions of Barbie played tennis or went to court as a lawyer. What do Bratz girls do? They shop. Well... at least they did. Their shopping days are numbered, just as consumers' shopping days for the Bratz dolls are numbered. They will be off retail shelves after the holiday season.

"Grieve not that I die young. Is it not too well to pass away 'ere life hath lost its brightness?"

-LADY FLORA HASTINGS

### LINKS:

Sharon Lamb and Waterville's own Lyn Mikel Brown wrote a great book about marketing and media efforts to sell a very narrowly defined and shallow version of femininity in *Packaging Girlhood*. They are not lovers of the Bratz doll collection.

Preview this book at:

[www.packaginggirlhood.com](http://www.packaginggirlhood.com)

The American Psychological Association came down hard on the Bratz dolls in their 2007 report of the sexualization of girls in the media. Read the report at:

[www.apa.org/pi/wpo/sexualization.html](http://www.apa.org/pi/wpo/sexualization.html)

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## Important Announcement!

We are trying to plan the spring statewide conference at the Augusta Civic Center. We need to book the facilities as soon as we possibly can, but want to hear from you first.

Go online to our Moodle site and answer three simple questions to help us determine the best date for the conference.

You can find these three questions in the "What's New" section under the "Spring Conference Options" link.

Thanks for your input!

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### MySpace Cyberbullying Case



It will probably go down as the case that put cyberbullying on the map of America's conscience. It was two years ago in Missouri that 13-year-old Megan Meier committed suicide after her fictitious online boyfriend dumped her. Federal prosecutors argued that 49-year-old Lori Drew helped her daughter Sara create the fictitious account in a cruel effort to take revenge on Megan for insulting her daughter.

A federal jury in California found Lori Drew guilty on three misdemeanor charges of computer fraud but not guilty on the more serious felony charge of conspiracy. Now go back and read that previous sentence again. Do you notice anything odd? Let us help you with some questions:

- Why was this a federal case?
- Why did it take place in California when everything happened in Missouri?
- Why was Drew charged with computer fraud and conspiracy?

The answers to these questions shed some light on the nature of American cyberlaw and how difficult it can be to pursue cyberbullies for their online behaviors. The

reason why this was a federal case held in California was because the local police determined that Lori Drew hadn't broken any Missouri state laws. They had nothing to charge her with. Federal prosecutors determined that they had a case, but it would focus on MySpace and therefore be held in Los Angeles, where the online social networking site's servers are located.

Federal authorities decided to prosecute using the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986, which had previously been used almost exclusively to prosecute hacker crimes and online sexual predators. They argued that Drew violated MySpace's terms of service agreement when she did not offer "truthful and accurate" information in creating the fictitious online account. The felony charge was for conspiracy in accessing a computer without authorization with the intent to inflict emotional distress.

The MySpace case has raised some interesting questions about cyberlaw. An important question to consider is whether the law has fallen behind online behaviors. There is nothing in the law in most states to directly address cyberbullying behaviors, forcing federal prosecutors to creatively use computer fraud and conspiracy charges. Cyberlaw is a constant challenge, as technology and user behaviors develop rapidly, but changing and creating new laws is typically a slow process.

This begs the obvious question: do we need cyberbullying law? Many think so, including some members of Congress. Earlier this year the Megan Meier Cyberbullying Prevention Act was introduced by Linda Sanchez in the U.S. House. Its aim is to make it a federal crime to "transmit in interstate or foreign

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commerce any communication, with the intent to coerce, intimidate, harass, or cause substantial emotional distress to a person, using electronic means to support severe, repeated, and hostile behavior.” The bill is currently in committee.

As the title of the bill makes clear, this is a direct effort to prevent the string of ugly events that led to Megan Meier’s suicide. It’s important to look at the overall effect of the legislation, though. Critics of the bill contend that it would hamper free speech and create dangerous precedent in making innocent online activities illegal.

Even without the proposed Megan Meier Cyberbullying Prevention Act, many are alarmed by the precedent set with the recent verdicts. Remember that Lori Drew was found guilty for knowingly giving false information on the MySpace account. Does this now make it a punishable crime whenever anyone gives false information online? If so, there are millions are online daters, resume posters, and social networking users who are outside of the law.

Another important question to consider is whether online laws against cyberbullying are even necessary. Illegal activity is illegal activity, no matter where it occurs. Regardless of what happens from a legislative and legal perspective, we know that cyberbullying is an unfortunate reality that affects the lives of our students. The fact that it mostly happens outside of school is mostly irrelevant, as the hurt and shame that it creates are brought into our schools every day. Clearly this is an issue we need to address. The Megan Meier suicide is the worst case scenario, but cyberbullying is a no less of a problem when it doesn’t reach that tragic conclusion.

We have heard from many you asking us to address this issue. Expect to see more about it in the future. For now, there is a current event available at our website in response to the Megan Meier MySpace case. You can also access the following links to get more information on this increasingly important civil rights issue.

To view a copy of the full text version of the Megan Meier Cyberbullying Prevention Act, go to:

[www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=h110-6123](http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=h110-6123)

A good op-ed piece from UNLV’s news source, fearing the implications of the legal decision:

<http://unlvrebelyell.com/2008/12/01/freedom-of-speech-isnt-subjective/>

A piece about how technology is always ahead of legislation:

<http://profy.com/2007/12/06/cyberbullying-laws/>

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An inviting exhibit at the Maine State Museum:  
*At Home in Maine*



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### *At Home in Maine*



It's hard not to have mixed feelings whenever you come across an African American section at the bookstore, an ethnic identity course taught at a college, or the annual celebration of Women's History Month. The obvious positive is that people are making an active effort to recognize the important achievements and contributions that oft-ignored or under-represented people have made in the world. The negative is that it's necessary to make these special efforts; it's a remedy for the omissions and narrow-minded work of others.

In her introduction to *Not the Only One*, a collection of gay/lesbian themed short stories written for adolescent readers, editor Jane Summer bemoans the very existence of the gay/lesbian literature label. She astutely observes that in an ideal world, there wouldn't have to be special sections of the library or bookstore reserved for gay/lesbian stories, and her book wouldn't be necessary. Gay and lesbian characters and stories would be represented in all genres, therefore rendering the gay/lesbian genre unnecessary.

Replace the words gay/lesbian with any racial, ethnic, or religious group and it's the

same idea. Of course it's tempting for many here in the state of Maine to think that there is little in terms of diversity, but the Maine State Museum is making an active effort to disprove this popular misconception. Exhibits in the museum reflect Maine's rich and sometimes surprising ethnic and immigrant history, creating a truly inclusive experience.

The Maine State Museum's newest permanent exhibit, *At Home in Maine*, showcases four centuries of homelife here in Maine, and makes an active effort to include Maine's rich history of immigrant and ethnic populations. But, as curator Kate McBrien noted, "We're not in your face with it." It's simply there, quietly asserting itself as important simply because of its presence.

It's certainly worth noting that the *At Home in Maine* exhibit is excellent. You and your civil rights teams probably haven't seen it yet, either; it opened on November 22<sup>nd</sup>. The exhibit replicates typical rooms you might find in Maine homes at different times in our state's history.

In terms of ethnic and immigrant history, there are three displays that are of special significance. The first one actually opens the exhibit. It's called "Making Maine Home" and highlights how different people from around the world first came to Maine and chose it as their home. It features a large curved mural with last names from families from around the world who chose Maine as their home. It also features photographs of different ethnic and immigrant populations, as well as displays showcasing Maine immigrants' prized possessions. Standing opposite this impressive mural is a display of old travel suitcases and an invitation to sign/write in a

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Part of the "Making Maine Home" display room.



Luggage helps tell the story of how people first came to Maine.

book titled "How Did Your Family Come to Maine?" The museum plans on keeping all of these entries, allowing visitors to contribute to the exhibit and identify with the history of other immigrant populations.

The other two displays of note from an ethnic/immigrant history perspective are included as examples of typical rooms: there is an old 1880's Acadian kitchen from the St. John Valley and a 1938 replica of Maine's noted African-American family the Talbots. These displays aren't necessarily highlighted as being French-Canadian and African-American; rather, they are simply included amongst all the other displays.

This makes their history visible and, in a way, serves to legitimize it. It is history that can stand on its own merits with the rest of the exhibit.

This logic seems to permeate the *At Home in Maine* exhibit. Scattered throughout its displays are photographs, quotes, and numerous artifacts from ethnic and immigrant Mainers: African American, Chinese, French-Canadian, German, Jewish, Lebanese, Native American, Russian, Scottish, Slovak, and Swedish. While the exhibit may not be promoted as ethnic and immigrant history, it certainly reflects it.

This is the way history should be presented. It should be inclusive and representative, so that all of Maine's people are visible. To learn about Maine's ethnic and immigrant history, you shouldn't have to seek out a special book, lecture, or exhibit. It should already be there.

The obvious positive of the Maine State Museum's approach to including ethnic and immigrant history in their *At Home in Maine* exhibit is the way it legitimizes the whole exhibit. It makes the whole exhibit more representative and accurate, but also avoids banishing the ethnic and immigrant elements to a back room somewhere and marking them as somehow inferior or lesser forms of history.

There is one negative to this approach, however; if your actual focus is on the ethnic and immigrant aspects of Maine's history, it's tough to piece it all together. The one-stop shopping appeal of an ethnic or immigrant exhibit is hard to beat. Civil rights teams looking for a great field trip opportunity will have to work a little harder with the *At Home in Maine* exhibit, but the

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A view of the 1880's Acadian kitchen.



The Talbots' 1938 dining room.

resources are there for a meaningful look at Maine's ethnic and immigrant history.

There is also good news on this front. The education department of the museum has plans to create programs focusing on ethnicity and immigration in the future. The exhibit also includes an "attic space" in the end (complete with wonderful creaking floorboards) where groups can meet and conduct activities. It's easy to envision civil rights teams having meaningful discussions about Maine's ethnic and immigrant history in this space.

The museum is free for student groups. It is open Monday through Friday from 9:00-

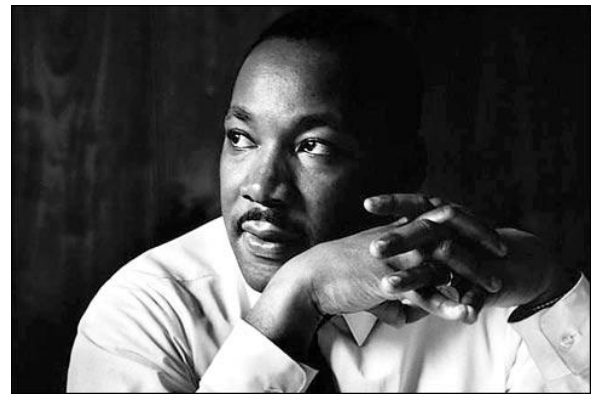
5:00 and Saturday 10:00-4:00. For more information, contact:

Joanna Torow, Chief Educator  
287-6608 or [joanna.torow@maine.gov](mailto:joanna.torow@maine.gov)

Visit the museum's website at:

[www.mainestatemuseum.org](http://www.mainestatemuseum.org)

## Honoring and Celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr.



January 19, 2009 marks our annual celebration of the life and work of Martin Luther King, Jr. This is always a golden opportunity for civil rights teams to do something public and connect his work with our efforts to improve our schools. There is a wealth of information and resources available. We have included a few project ideas here.

For additional Martin Luther King Day activities, see our December 2007 and December 2006 editions of *The Torch*. You can access both copies of the newsletter online at our website.

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### **Make MLK Day a Day of Service**

In 1994 Congress passed the King Holiday and Service Act, designating the King Holiday as a national day of volunteer service. The idea is that the holiday should not be a day off, but a day of service: a way to honor the memory of Martin Luther King, Jr. and those who participated in the Civil Rights Movement. Many Americans are unaware of the service aspect of this national holiday.

Learn more about it at:

[www.mlkday.gov](http://www.mlkday.gov)

The government site could provide the inspiration for your team to adopt a service project on January 19<sup>th</sup>.

### **Write a List Poem**

Create a team list poem with any of the following topics/titles:

I Have a Dream That...  
If Dr. King Were Alive Today...  
We Honor Martin Luther King Because...

And of course, feel free to come up with your own. For the list poem instructions, check out the October edition of *The Torch* or visit our website and access the lesson under "Fall Trainings".

### **Explore King's Quotes**

No one can compare to Martin Luther King, Jr. for thought-provoking civil rights quotes. Have students go online, find some of his quotes, and choose their favorites. They can then share them with the team and explain why they chose them. These quotes can be

illustrated and posted on a bulletin board or read over the intercom during the month of January.

For some of King's more memorable quotes, go to:

[www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/m/martin\\_luther\\_king\\_jr.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/m/martin_luther_king_jr.html)

[www.mlkonline.net/quotes.html](http://www.mlkonline.net/quotes.html)

### **Compare King with Malcolm X**

Many students have little appreciation for the potential explosiveness of race relations in the 1960's. We see King's leadership and path towards desegregation as inevitable today because it already happened, but there were other alternatives. Comparing King and X is a useful way for students to understand and appreciate King's nonviolent philosophy and get an opposing viewpoint. To view videos and speeches from the two civil rights leaders, go to the new Martin Luther King section on our website and click on "Differing Views of Dr. King and Malcolm X".

### **Illustrate the "I Have a Dream" Speech**

Even though King's "I Have a Dream" speech is overtaught and one of the few things students actually learn about him, it's still a great speech. A great activity is taking individual lines from the speech and illustrating them. Encourage modern interpretations of the lines so that the speech comes alive.

It's not important that students illustrate the whole speech; just the parts that most interest them.

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A great follow-up question to consider with your team is how much progress we have made towards achieving King's dream. Which parts have come true? Which have not?

For text and video of the speech, go to:

[www.mlkonline.net/speeches.html](http://www.mlkonline.net/speeches.html)

There is also a beautiful book that did this very project: different artists contributed illustrations for lines of King's speech. Preview the book at:

[www.amazon.com/Have-Dream-Martin-Luther-King/dp/0590205161](http://www.amazon.com/Have-Dream-Martin-Luther-King/dp/0590205161)

### Good Online Activities

Fill in blanks for King's "I Have a Dream Speech" at:

[www.windmillworks.com/gamesonline/clozegames/dream.htm](http://www.windmillworks.com/gamesonline/clozegames/dream.htm)

Look at some of the popular misconceptions and mythology surrounding King at:

[www.wmich.edu/teachmlk/myths.htm](http://www.wmich.edu/teachmlk/myths.htm)

### Visit Our Website

We have added a new section on Martin Luther King. It will include everything you see here, as well as other ideas and resources. There will be a discussion forum about King's influence today on your work. We encourage you to contribute.

Keep checking in on our site, as this section will be constantly evolving.

## New and Exciting Resources!

### ***Barack and Curtis: New Short Film on Black Masculinity***



Byron Hurt, keynote speaker at the Boys to Men conference in 2006, has created a new short film on black masculinity titled *Barack and Curtis*. The film profiles and compares two very different representations of black masculinity: Barack Obama and Curtis Jackson, better known as the rapper 50 Cent. The film offers an interesting look at issues of race and gender, as well as how those issues intersect.

See the film at Byron Hurt's website:

[www.bhurt.com/barackandcurtis.php](http://www.bhurt.com/barackandcurtis.php)



### **Gene Luen Yang's "Prime Baby" in the *NY Times***

Gene Luen Yang, creator of the award winning and *Torch*-profiled graphic novel *American Born Chinese*, is currently featured in the *New York Times Magazine*. His Prime Baby series has been serialized for publication in the Funny Pages section for 18 weeks. The story stars Thaddeus K. Fong, a young Asian-American boy who seems to have an autistic younger sister.

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Read the first two parts of the series (and the rest of it as it gets published), at:

[www.nytimes.com/ref/magazine/funnypages.html](http://www.nytimes.com/ref/magazine/funnypages.html)

See Yang's other work at:

[www.humblecomics.com](http://www.humblecomics.com)

### **Civil Rights Book Club**

CivilRights.org has a book club that selects five recommended books each month. The selections are usually focused on a monthly theme and are mostly directed towards adult readers. This month's themes are poverty and Native American life. The backlogged previous selections serve as a wonderful reading list.

See this month's selections at:

[www.civilrights.org/resources/bookclub](http://www.civilrights.org/resources/bookclub)

See three years' worth of previous selections at:

[www.civilrights.org/resources/bookclub/previous\\_selections.html](http://www.civilrights.org/resources/bookclub/previous_selections.html)

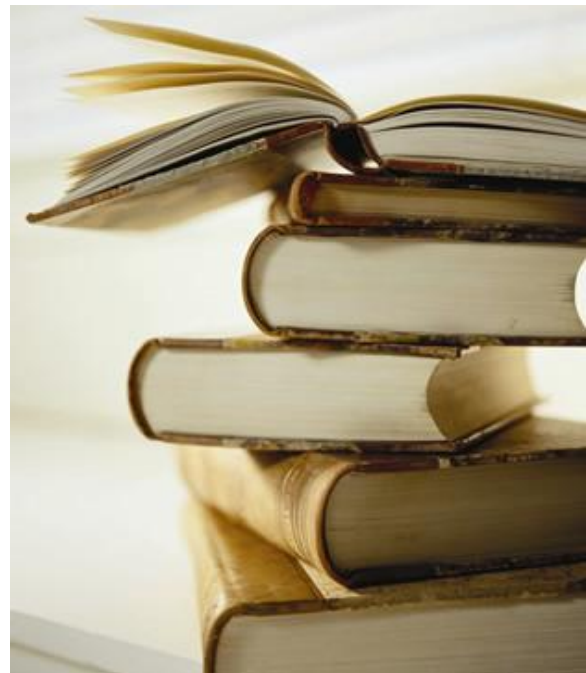
### **The *Skipping Stones* Honor Awards**

*Skipping Stones* magazine has announced their annual Honor Awards recognizing "26 exceptional books and teaching resources." Most of the 26 awards fall under the "Multicultural and International Awareness" category and are honored for "encouraging an understanding of the world's diverse cultures" and "promoting cooperation, nonviolence, respect for differing viewpoints, and close relationships in human societies." These books and resources are for elementary and middle school students.

Check them out at:

[www.skippingstones.org/honorawards2008.htm](http://www.skippingstones.org/honorawards2008.htm)

You can also download the list as a PDF file on our website.



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**G. Steven Rowe --- Attorney General**  
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