

# THE TORCH

## CIVIL RIGHTS TEAM PROJECT NEWSLETTER

December 2006

Newsletter Editor: Amy Homans

January is a busy month on the civil rights calendar with both Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebrations and No Name-calling Week. This issue of *The Torch* includes information and activities for both of those events, as well as some highlights for the upcoming Black History Month, more local resources for learning about Maine's Native American peoples and more.

JANUARY 15, 2007,  
MARTIN LUTHER KING  
JR., DAY



***"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."***

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is a day of celebration, public service and reflection for some people and for others it is a welcome day off from school or work. In the midst of busy lives, it can be easy to forget exactly why we honor Martin Luther King, Jr. with this holiday. The late Coretta Scott King's words on the significance of this day are a well-spoken reminder to all of us.

**The Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday celebrates the life and legacy of a man**

**who brought hope and healing to America. We commemorate as well the timeless values he taught us through his example -- the values of courage, truth, justice, compassion, dignity, humility and service that so radiantly defined Dr. King's character and empowered his leadership. On this holiday, we commemorate the universal, unconditional love, forgiveness and nonviolence that empowered his revolutionary spirit.**

...

**On this day we commemorate Dr. King's great dream of a vibrant, multiracial nation united in justice, peace and reconciliation; a nation that has a place at the table for children of every race and room at the inn for every needy child. We are called on this holiday, not merely to honor, but to celebrate the values of equality, tolerance and interracial sister and brotherhood he so compellingly expressed in his great dream for America.**

...

**It is a day of interracial and intercultural cooperation and sharing. No other day of the year brings so many peoples from different cultural backgrounds together in such a vibrant spirit of brother and sisterhood. Whether you are African-American, Hispanic or Native American, whether you are Caucasian or Asian-American, you are part of the great dream Martin Luther King, Jr. had for America. This is not a black holiday; it is a peoples' holiday. And it is the young people of**

# THE TORCH

## CIVIL RIGHTS TEAM PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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**all races and religions who hold the keys to the fulfillment of his dream.**

(For the complete text, go to [www.thekingcenter.org/holiday/index.asp](http://www.thekingcenter.org/holiday/index.asp).)

Many of you who are committed to your work with the Civil Rights Team Project embody the spirit of Martin Luther King's hopes for the young people of our country. You all hold the keys to fulfilling his dream.

In 2007, it will be the rare school that does not celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day with some activity or event, whether in individual class rooms or on a school-wide basis. Many excellent resources have been developed for every age group by a wide range of sources. Here are just a few of the resources and ideas available to help schools bring this hero of the Civil Rights Movement to life for another generation of Americans.

For a variety of MLK JR. Day activities for grades 1-8, a one stop site is Eduplace at [www.eduplace.com/monthlytheme/january/mlk\\_activities.html](http://www.eduplace.com/monthlytheme/january/mlk_activities.html). This site includes links to a whole range of activities including an MLK, Jr. Day "Scavenger Hunt" that poses a question and then provides a link which students can go to in order to learn the answer. It also has an interactive timeline on the life of MLK, Jr., links to audio recordings of his "I Have a Dream" speech, and a lesson plan centered around Dr. King's famous letter written from a jail cell in Birmingham, Alabama.

An endless supply of quizzes, crossword puzzles, time lines and basic fact sheets can be found online simply by googling *Martin Luther King, Jr. Day activities*.

Lead a small group discussion on the meaning of Dr. King's "I Have A Dream" speech. Listen to the speech at [www.eduplace.com/monthlytheme/january/mlk\\_activities.html](http://www.eduplace.com/monthlytheme/january/mlk_activities.html), then discuss what Dr. King was trying to say through that speech.

Some other thoughtful small group discussion suggestions can be found at [www.sites4teachers.com/links/redirect.php?url=http://socialstudies.com/c/@ErkLyQt3ynWCE/Pages/article.html?article@TCM242](http://www.sites4teachers.com/links/redirect.php?url=http://socialstudies.com/c/@ErkLyQt3ynWCE/Pages/article.html?article@TCM242). Suggested discussion topics include the 1963 Civil Rights March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, the concepts of "prejudice," "peaceful," and "boycott," and the significance of the Nobel Peace Prize, which was awarded to Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1964. Appropriate books to accompany the discussions are also suggested.

Use the concept of the Silhouette Project to create a **Wall of Dreams** at your school. Have students trace each other's bodies on bulletin board paper and cut out each silhouette with scissors. Make sure the students lie on the paper with their hands open and slightly away from their sides. Have each student write his or her dreams for peace within the boundaries of the silhouette. Hang the silhouettes on a wall in your school, with the hands of each silhouette touching the hands of the silhouettes on either side of it. This can also be done as a classroom activity with the silhouettes lining the walls of the classroom.

A particularly informative website for older students can be found at <http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/>. This site is maintained by Stanford University for The Martin Luther King, Jr. Education and Research Institute. The Institute is home to

# THE TORCH

## CIVIL RIGHTS TEAM PROJECT NEWSLETTER

December 2006

Newsletter Editor: Amy Homans

the King Papers Project, a major research effort to assemble and disseminate historical information concerning Martin Luther King, Jr. and the social movements in which he participated. All of his landmark speeches and sermons are available at this site including, "I've Been to the Mountaintop," "Eulogy For The Young Victims of the Sixteen Street Baptist Church Bombings," and many others. Excerpts from many of them are also available on audio.

Consider using excerpts of Dr. King's speeches on posters in the hallways of your school. Assign a different landmark speech to each team member (or allow them to pick their own) and have each team member choose a passage to write on a poster, noting the name of the speech and the date and location of its delivery. A couple of sentences describing the significance of the speech and what was happening in the Civil Rights Movement at the time of the speech would add depth to this project. For example, explaining that four young girls were killed at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church when it was bombed, and that the church bombing was one of a series that took place in the South at that time, would put Dr. King's eulogy on that subject into perspective.

Another facet of the King Papers Project at Stanford that is of interest to high school teachers and advisors is the [Liberation Curriculum](#). The Liberation Curriculum is designed to support the work of high school teachers by fostering professional development and curricular innovation through the use of internet and multimedia technology. The goal of the project is to create historically accurate and pedagogically effective educational materials that address issues of social justice and human rights, while meeting state and

national frameworks. Participating teachers collaborate with KPP staff to develop academically rigorous lesson plans that encourage critical inquiry and inspire civic engagement. Access to an online learning community, coupled with a series of workshops, gives teachers the necessary resources and support to fully integrate the Liberation Curriculum into their teaching. **Lesson plans are made available to the public through the Liberation Community website.**

The King Center in Atlanta has many resources, but one of the highlights of its website is an audio excerpt from one of MLK, Jr.'s speeches on greatness and service that begins as soon as the site opens up. Bringing MLK, Jr. alive through his spoken words can be a powerful tool in helping students understand what a motivating force he was for millions of people. Serious students of MLK, Jr. history will be interested to know that the King Center's site allows visitors to view the entire transcript of the criminal trial of James Earl Ray, the man who was convicted of assassinating MLK, Jr.

Another excellent online source of information *The Seattle Times'* website at [www.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/mlk/index.html](http://www.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/mlk/index.html). In particular, the photo gallery contains photos of many historical moments between 1956 and 1968. This site also provides a link to Dr. King's speech, "What Is Your Life's Blueprint?" that he gave to a group of Philadelphia junior high school students in 1967. That speech, which speaks directly to young people, can be found at [www.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/mlk/king/words/blueprint.html](http://www.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/mlk/king/words/blueprint.html).

Above all, consider Dr. King's words: "Everybody can be great, because

# THE TORCH

## CIVIL RIGHTS TEAM PROJECT NEWSLETTER

December 2006

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everybody can serve.” Honor Dr. King by improving your world through a **day of service**. Organize or participate in a community service project and spend Martin Luther King, Jr. Day volunteering to help others. This is far and away the most meaningful way to celebrate this holiday and to further the mission of Dr. King. For project ideas and tips, go to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service website at [www.mlkday.gov/resources/tips/index.asp](http://www.mlkday.gov/resources/tips/index.asp).



### Quote of the Month

The following quote was written for a civil rights team poster by 6<sup>th</sup> grader Catherine McElvain. We thought it was too good not to share with everyone.

"Sticks and stones may break your bones but unkind words that go too far are guaranteed to leave a SCAR."

We here are the Civil Rights Team Project have always disagreed with the proposition that words will never hurt you. Catherine's quote captures

exactly how most of us feel about unkind words. Nice work, Catherine!



### NO NAME CALLING WEEK: JANUARY 22-26, 2007

This event certainly sounds good based on its name alone. But just what is it? Read on to learn about No Name-Calling Week and the free resources available to you and your school community.

No Name-Calling Week is an annual nationwide week of educational activities aimed at ending name-calling of all kinds and providing schools with the tools and inspiration to launch an on-going dialogue about ways to eliminate bullying in their community. No Name-Calling Week is coordinated by the Gay Lesbian and Straight Educators Network (GLSEN) and Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing, along with forty national educational organization partners.

The genesis for No Name-Calling Week was the popular book *The Misfits*, written by James Howe. *The Misfits* tells the story a four best friends trying to survive the seventh grade in the face of all too frequent taunts based on their weight, height, intelligence, and sexual orientation/gender expression. Motivated by the inequities they see around them, they create a new political

# THE TORCH

## CIVIL RIGHTS TEAM PROJECT NEWSLETTER

December 2006

Newsletter Editor: Amy Homans

party during student council elections and run on a platform aimed at wiping out name-calling of all kinds. They lose the election, but they win the support of the school's principal for their cause and their idea for a "No Name-Calling Day" at school.

The No Name-Calling Coalition has prepared eleven excellent lesson plans that can be used during No Name-Calling Week, or at any other time during the year. The lesson plans include: "Are You Part Of The In Crowd?," "I Was Just Kidding!," "Beauty Is Only Skin Deep," "What's In A Name?," and "Using Literature As A Tool To End Name-Calling."

In addition, other resources provided by the Coalition include: 10 Simple Ways To Celebrate No Name-Calling Week in your school; a comprehensive listing of activities other schools have done to recognize No Name-Calling Week; sample letters to administrators from students, and downloadable stickers, logos and poster.

These are terrific resources and all of them are available at no cost at [www.nonamecallingweek.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/resources/index.html](http://www.nonamecallingweek.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/resources/index.html). In addition, for a fee of \$129.95, schools can order the No Name-Calling Week Resource Kit. The Resource Kit includes a 27 minute educational VHS video entitled *No Name-Calling: Creating Safe Environments*; a resource guide with program information, lesson plans, resource lists, and other curricular material; a copy of *The Misfits*; 60 No Name-Calling Week stickers and two posters. The kit can be ordered by going to [www.nonamecallingweek.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/order\\_kit/index.html](http://www.nonamecallingweek.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/order_kit/index.html).

No Name-Calling Week is targeted for students in grades 5-8, but the activities and lesson plans can easily be adapted by students and educators for other grade levels.

Another No Name-Calling Week resource, endorsed by GLSEN and its educational partners, is *It Takes A Team!*. *It Takes A Team!*, a project of the Women's Sports Foundation, is an educational campaign that focuses on eliminating homophobia as a barrier to all men and women participating in sports. So, if you are tired of name calling in sports, take a look at [Takes A Team!](#), [Eliminating name-calling in athletics](#) and [Resources for your athletic department](#) for more information on how your school's athletic department can participate in No Name-Calling Week.

This project is a near perfect fit with the issues on which civil rights teams across the state are working. Even if you are not planning on doing a full-scale observance of No Name-Calling Week in your school, consider using some the activities and resources prepared by the Coalition at any time during the school year. As always, please do not hesitate to share this valuable resource with other faculty and staff members in your school community.



# THE TORCH

## CIVIL RIGHTS TEAM PROJECT NEWSLETTER

December 2006

Newsletter Editor: Amy Homans



### THINKING AHEAD TO BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History Month is celebrated during the month of February and there's no time like the present to start thinking about how you and your team will recognize this event on the civil rights calendar.

One interesting resource available right here in Maine is **Assata Sherrill**, a Bangor resident who does interactive theatre work through the re-creation of historical black figures. Mr. Sherrill is particularly adept in her re-creation of Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, but she has other historical figures in her repertoire, including Martin Luther King, Jr.

Mr. Sherrill has performed at Connors Emerson Elementary School in Bar Harbor in past years, at the invitation of the Connors Emerson Civil Rights Team. She has received great reviews for her work with children and would be a unique way for your school to participate in the

celebration of Black History Month. Ms. Sherrill can be contacted at (207) 433-7575 for more information.

There will be many suggestions in the next newsletter on how to celebrate Black History Month in your school community. In the interim, take a look at the January 2006 issue of *The Torch* for some ideas to help get the creative juices flowing.



### AND LOOKING BACK TO NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

Two more great Native American History resources available to those of us fortunate enough to live in Maine are the Abbe Museum and the Hudson Museum.

The Abbe Museum, located at 26 Mount Desert Street in Bar Harbor, focuses on Maine's Native American history, culture, art and archaeology. The Abbe Museum is currently featuring a new on-line Wabanaki History Timeline curriculum that demonstrates how Wabanaki peoples have maintained their cultural identity over time. The on-line timeline includes over 100 entries in addition to primary source documents and definitions of key words. The Abbe Museum also has school programs that last

# THE TORCH

## CIVIL RIGHTS TEAM PROJECT NEWSLETTER

December 2006

Newsletter Editor: Amy Homans

approximately two hours for field trip visitors, including Native American Beadwork of the Northeast and Abbe Archaeology for Kids. Go to [www.abbemuseum.org/](http://www.abbemuseum.org/) for more information.

The Hudson Museum is located in Orono at the University of Maine and features four Native American galleries. The museum welcomes school groups and provides guided tours. It also has a curriculum connection with activities to support the teaching of Maine Native American history and culture. The curriculum connection is designed specifically to support the legal requirement that Maine native history and culture be taught to all elementary and secondary school students in the state.

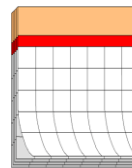
The Hudson Museum offers two online hands on activities. The first is a bookmark activity that teaches students about Maine native basketry. The second provides instructions on how to make and play waltes, a traditional Northeastern Native American bowl game once played by all of Maine's Native tribes. There are also a number of excellent online lesson plans at the museum's website at [www.umaine.edu/hudsonmuseum/](http://www.umaine.edu/hudsonmuseum/).

### 2006 Waponaki Student Art Show/Hudson Museum



*December 4, 2006 to January 31, 2007*

If you live within driving distance of Orono, be sure to visit the Waponaki Student Art Show at the Hudson Museum. This exhibition, marking its fourth year, showcases current artwork by pre-school and elementary students on the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy reservations and Native students at nearby high schools. The exhibit is organized by the Abbe Museum and Maine Indian Education. The image depicted at the left is titled "Otter", by Adam Bailey, grade 7.



### UPCOMING EVENTS AND SIGNIFICANT DATES

**January 6, 2007 (Saturday): Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance- Interfaith Dialogue: *Exploring Racism in Faith: Why is Religion Used to Perpetuate Racism?* 6:00 p.m., Gerald E. Talbot Lecture Hall, USM, Portland Campus. Free and open to the public.**

# THE TORCH

## CIVIL RIGHTS TEAM PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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**January 14, 2007 (Sunday): Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance- Music and Gospel Concert. 6:00 p.m., Merrill Auditorium, Portland City Hall. \$10 for adults and \$5 for children under 12. Tickets are on sale at [PortTix](#) now.** This event is a multicultural concert featuring local gospel choirs along with Women in Harmony, Rock My Soul, Pihcintu (an international children's choir), Inkaswazi (Peruvian pan pipe), a Native American Women's drum group, and drummers from Dafur, Sudan.

**January 15: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

**January 15, 2007 (Monday): Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance- Breakfast Celebration, Holiday Inn By the Bay, Portland. Keynote speaker, Anthony Romero, Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union.** This event always sells out early so purchase your tickets by downloading the [order form](#) and mailing it in with payment to the address on the form. Tickets will not be sold at the door. Childcare will be provided for children ages 5-12. For more information, call (207) 253-5074.

**January 22-26: No Name Calling Week.** For more information, go to [www.nonamecallingweek.org/cgi-bin/iowa/home.html](http://www.nonamecallingweek.org/cgi-bin/iowa/home.html).

**February: Black History Month**

**March: Women's History Month**

**Monday, May 7, 2007: CRTP Statewide Conference, Augusta Civic Center**  
Save the date and book your bus now.



### **“Extra, Extra, Read All About It!”**

Has your team just completed a successful project, read a great book, had a good fundraiser, listened to an inspiring speaker, seen a compelling video, or done something that was just plain fun that you would like to share with other teams? If we don't hear about it, we can't share it with other teams. Send in a blurb to *The Torch* and we will include it in a future issue. Send your news to [amy@maine.rr.com](mailto:amy@maine.rr.com) with the subject heading: **Newsletter item.**

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*G. Steven Rowe --- Attorney General  
Thomas A. Harnett—Director, Civil Rights  
Education & Enforcement Unit  
Debi Gray, Civil Rights Project Administrator*