

ZA'NYA BROADNAX-YANCEY  
KINDERGARTEN PROSE WINNER  
MS. MARY BONOSKY  
JEFFERSON II MONTESSORI

What I Have Learned from Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. King helped people. I help my mom by cleaning the floor with the vacuum. I like to mop, too, and sometimes I slip. I wash dishes for my grandma.

When I grow up I will help people by selling pies. When they go home, they can feed their families.

ASHON N. ENGLISH  
FIRST GRADE PROSE WINNER  
MS. DIANA BLACK  
CORNELL HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Explaining the meaning of the quotation Dr. King used in his speech during the March on Washington for Jobs and Justice. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

My paper is on Dr. King’s speech in Washington.

I know he was a leader. I wish he were still living so that he could continue to help others as he did with his March on Washington, fighting for equal rights on jobs, and justice for all. I learned from reading about the Civil Rights Movement that Dr. King believed that only are all men created equal, but that all people, black and white, are not 100% free.

Freedom comes with the price of struggling to keep from being poor, staying away from violence, and following the laws of the land that have been set for us.

He said in his famous speech that he hoped his “four 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.”

I believe that a person’s character is about who that person is and his accomplishments, not what that person is about or what wrongs or mistakes he or she has struggled to overcome.

I believe we are all one people struggling to be free.

TALAYA ROBINSON-DANCY  
SECOND GRADE PROSE WINNER  
MRS. PAM STYLES  
WORLD OF WONDER PRIMARY SCHOOL

What I Have Done to Make One of Dr. King's Dreams a Reality

I learned lots from a book about Martin Luther King, Jr. by Garnet Jackson. From Dr. King's example, I learned how to love all kinds of people by giving food to hungry people. I tried to lessen violence by trying to stop the fights of a lot my friends, because I care about them.

I learned that not long ago, black children were not allowed to go to school with white children, but now we can go to any school we want to.

I learned from Martin Luther King, Jr. to be as wise as possible. He taught us about love, not hatred. He learned about the Bible, too.

KAILON DOUGLAS, JR.  
THIRD GRADE PROSE WINNER  
K-3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE-GROUP WINNER  
MR. CRAIG POWELL  
DAYTON BOYS PREPARATORY ACADEMY

### Stopping the Violence in My Neighborhood

How can I stop the violence in my neighborhood? One way I can stop the violence in my neighborhood is to be a role model by staying away from all violence. Secondly, talk with people about not starting violence and the consequences you may suffer. Thirdly, I can tell people how good it will be to live in a neighborhood of peace.

Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. wanted to solve violence without being violent. He wanted to solve unfair laws without being violent. Martin Luther King did not like violence.

Violence has been passed on for many years and I want it to stop. I think violence is bad for children. I want violence to be solved, but not with guns or fists.

**TAIYON HECTOR  
FOURTH GRADE PROSE WINNER  
MS. ALLISON WANTZ  
MEADOWDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**How I Can Let Peace Fly Over My City**

**I wish I could make all the violence leave my city and help all white and black people get along. Just like Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., I have a dream that everybody will put their hands together for peace for their entire life.**

**Dr. King, please tell God to help violence leave our hometown.**

**I want to let peace fly over my city. I will tell violent people to calm down. Handle the things you have problems with. I will say peaceful words and do kind things to help you.**

**BRIONNA QUISENBERRY  
FIFTH GRADE PROSE WINNER  
4<sup>TH</sup>-6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE-GROUP PROSE WINNER  
MS. MCKENZIE COSTELLO  
MEADOWDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

### **Lessening Violence in My Neighborhood**

**I want less violence in my neighborhood. Every day when I come home and watch the news, somebody has died. Yesterday, somebody was shot on my street. It was my neighbor. It hurts me when people shoot other people.**

**When people see each other, they should respect other people. We should also respect teachers in our school and our mothers at home. I don't think it's right to disrespect ourselves or people in our community. I wish we could all get along and America was a peaceful place to live in.**

**Here are some things I think that we could do to lessen violence in our community and in America. We could ask the President to propose banning guns. We also need to create some strong black leaders like Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. I also wish there were more constructive role models in our community. The drugs in our community are killing the younger generation as well as the older people. There are liquor stores on every corner. There are younger alcoholics every day and it is killing our people. We need to stand above these influences and say no to drugs and alcohol.**

**Parents need to take extra precautions in making better homes for our youth. They need to spend more quality time with their children and monitor what is going on. They need to take advantage of the ratings on their television so that our youth do not see all the violence on television.**

**I am a very peaceful person, and I wish that everyone could be the same. Since some are not, I guess actions speak louder than words. We need to take a stand against violence and come together.**

**CHRISTOPHER BOZEMAN  
SIXTH GRADE PROSE WINNER  
CRYSTAL RAINEY  
ZION BAPTIST CHURCH TUTORIAL PROGRAM**

### **What We Still Must Overcome: Violence**

**Today, all Americans are touched directly or indirectly by violence. Children are killing children; parents are killing children, and adults are killing adults. We are threatening each other and pulling out weapons without thinking of other ways to deal with one another. Most children who commit violent acts see their parents doing violent things, and think it is all right to do so. This is a cycle of violence that needs to be broken.**

**Like Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. , I think violence is wrong. There are several ways we can lessen violence. The first way is to love one another and to have peace with each other, even with our enemies. I think that we can all love one another, but first we need to start with loving ourselves.**

**Another thing we need to do is to stop arguing with one another. Instead of acting out in violence, stop and think of better ways to control anger. Count to ten. Think, "What will happen if I react in a violent way?" We all need to talk out disagreements.**

**We can overcome violence if we bring peace to all situations, regardless of the way we feel at the moment. Violence is out of hand because most people do not know how to deal with their emotions or feelings. We need to stop being easily angered.**

**Finally, we need to start trusting and believing in one another, and know that violence is not the answer.**

**SHAUNTAURIUS BAKER  
SEVENTH GRADE PROSE WINNER  
PAULETTE ALLEN-FLOYD  
WOGAMAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

### **What We Have Overcome**

**When we look at our past, we may ask, “What have we overcome?” Today we have overcome some prejudice. Even though we still have people who are prejudiced, we have overcome this problem in many souls.**

**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a great part of overcoming this and other problems because he fought for equal rights for the black community. His moving words brought people together and helped change the country’s laws. Even today his words still motivate people around the world to work for equality, freedom and justice. In fact, his message remains so powerful that in 2003, on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the “March on Washington,” the words “I Have a Dream” were carved into the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.**

**Another problem we have overcome is discrimination. For example, blacks have the same rights as any other race. Thanks to Dr. King and others, we have the right to vote and to sit where we choose on public transportation. It took a lot of courage and strength for this equal treatment to take place.**

**The final thing we have overcome is segregation by law. We can be together as one group, community and nation, a diverse people.**

**Overcoming these problems took many years, much patience, and the help of Dr. King and many other brave leaders who stood up for what they believed in. Everyone now has an equal chance and equal opportunities in this world. However, we must continue as one to strive for what we trust in and believe.**

**TYRA SIMMONS  
EIGHTH GRADE PROSE WINNER  
MS. BARBARA MACK  
MS. MENTA KIMBELL  
NAACP YOUTH COUNCIL**

### **What We Still Must Overcome**

**In his “I Have a Dream” speech, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stated part of the Declaration of Independence. “I have a dream that this great nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed. ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.’”**

**Some of Dr. King’s dreams are yet to be fulfilled. We have many things that we need to overcome today. Discrimination is one of them. There are actually different kinds of discrimination, such as race, religion and gender. Our society discriminates against women in some work environments. One example is the construction field. Some people think that women are not as strong as men, that they are unable to run the special machines and to lift heavy objects.**

**People are also discriminated against because of obesity and other physical traits. The media describe beauty as a slender figure, long hair and light eyes. Those who do not have these qualities are belittled and treated as though they mean nothing to the world.**

**Martin Luther King, Jr. and many other ancestors fought hard for African Americans to gain the right to vote. Today, some blacks don’t vote because they don’t like the person running for an office or they supposedly can’t find the time in their busy schedule to go the polls and make a difference.**

**Dr. King spent his entire life fighting for the rights of African Americans. He made it his life’s mission to ensure that blacks were treated as equals. We should continue the legacy that so many people have fought for. We should dedicate our lives to our education, jobs, and making sure that we are treating others the way we want to be treated. We have to keep Martin Luther King’s dreams and visions alive, and that takes all of us as a whole.**

**JULIUS SOUTHERS  
NINTH GRADE PROSE WINNER  
7<sup>TH</sup>-9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE-GROUP PROSE WINNER  
MS. PHYLLIS ALLEN  
COLONEL WHITE ACADEMIC MAGNET ACADEMY**

### **What We Still Need to Overcome**

**Recently President George W. Bush reaffirmed the Voting Rights Act. This act allowed African Americans to vote in elections without repercussions and without the stringent requirements that were put in place to dissuade them from voting. Many legislators did not agree to the necessity of reaffirming this act, citing the many advance that society has made since the original signing. Yet, as I ponder this issue I see the many barriers that we have yet to overcome. There is inequality and injustice throughout the world; however, what concerns me the most is the inequality and injustice here in America.**

**The United States is purported to be one of the wealthiest countries, but the concentration of wealth remains among a small minority of persons who either were born into it or recently acquired it. Historically and presently, there have been wage disparities between African Americans and Caucasian Americans. The same inequalities exist between men and women of all races. With the growth of the Hispanic population, these disparities continue to grow as unscrupulous employers who are concerned only with their bottom line exploit Hispanic workers supporting families in America and in their native countries.**

**It is documented every year on income tax forms and every ten years through the Census Bureau that, on average, white men make more money than black men with equal education and experience. What is even stronger evidence of injustice is the fact that, on average, the white male with only a high school education makes more money than a black male with a college education. White and African American women are paid less on average than their white and African American male counterparts.**

**Disparities and inequality are most noticeable in the justice system. The majority of the inmates in the United States penal system are men of color. How is it that the minority population has more incarcerations than the majority population? Some would lead you to believe that it is because people of color tend to commit the most crimes, but this is untrue. European Americans commit crimes as well. The difference is the way the justice system metes out punishments to the offenders and the way law enforcement and legislators target crimes that are more likely to be committed by persons of color.**

**For example, in drug cases powder cocaine, which is more often used by Caucasian drug users and dealers, carries a lesser sentence than crack cocaine, which is more often used by persons of color. In fact, some drug dealers have been given life**

**sentences for selling crack cocaine. This is not justice as both forms of cocaine are derived from the same source.**

**Another example of injustice in the justice system was seen when a small southern town was given money to clean up its drug problem. The result was bogus charges instigated by a Caucasian law enforcement officer who incarcerated more than twenty innocent African American men and women for more than two years. It was not until an investigative reporter intervened that these men and women regained the freedom that should not have been taken from them in the first place.**

**Inequality can be seen in the way the media differentiate between African Americans and Caucasians committing the same acts. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, newspapers identified African Americans as looters and Caucasians as victims fighting for survival, even though members of both groups were doing the same things. If African American women kill their children shortly after their birth, they are called murderers and receive severe sentences. Caucasian women are cited as having postpartum depression and, if they are sentenced, they are paroled in a few years. Some are even released after being declared incompetent to stand trial.**

**Education is another area in which inequalities exist. African American children continue to score lower on standardized tests than Caucasian children. There are several opinions as to why this is so. I believe that standardized tests are culturally developed toward the Caucasian population. I also believe there is a lack of adequate funding in the educational systems in which minority populations are educated.**

**In a country founded upon the belief that all men are created equal, why do all of these disparities exist?**

**As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become reality. I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word."**

**I believe that if we come together on one accord, the prophecy and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. will be fulfilled. However, if we go on blindly ignoring these disparities, despair will be the legacy that the United States will leave to future generations.**

**RAVYN CORBITT  
TENTH GRADE PROSE WINNER  
MR. TONY RICCUITO  
CHAMINADE-JULIENNE HIGH SCHOOL**

**“We Hold These Truths...”**

**“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”**

**Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. quoted these lines from the Declaration of Independence in his speech during the March on Washington for Jobs and Justice. We should take this quotation to mean that no single person is different. The most powerful God above made us, not man. We are not obligated to please people, nor are we obligated to be someone that we are not. We must be the person that God has called us to be, and that is His child.**

**Sometimes we feel that others limit us. At times we limit ourselves. But we are free! We can go above and beyond our goals. We can all be the better person that Christ has called us to be. Not to turn our heads and look at the past, but to stretch forth and go for the future.**

**What is an “immigrant?” To you it may be someone who took your job. To me it means someone who is viewed unfairly in the United States. We are all the same. Your blood and his blood are both red. God loves him just as much as He loves you.**

**Make a difference! We have come too far in pursuing Dr. King’s dream of freedom to turn around and give up. It is important to understand that we all have the same rights. Just because a person may have a certain title, don’t let him discourage you. Strive for your happiness. Life is not going to be easy; no one said it would. Without trials and temptations, you would never know how much you need God.**

**Life is too valuable to just sit back and feel that you have all the power and that you have the right to look down your nose at anyone. Because you don’t! The power that you have has been given to you, and that means it can be taken away.**

**Keep the dream and keep the faith. Allow the voices of others to be heard, as well as your own. Allow every individual to have freedom. Don’t limit him or her to one country, or send him or her back because you think he or she doesn’t belong. They are not packages! You cannot box them and send them back. Dr. King’s quotation says we have the right to pursue happiness.**

**Keep his dream of equality alive.**

**ADRIENNE FAIRBANKS  
ELEVENTH GRADE PROSE WINNER  
10<sup>TH</sup>-12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE-GROUP PROSE WINNER  
COLONEL WHITE HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS  
MS. VIVIAN JORDAN**

### **What We Have Overcome**

**Are you not rejoicing to be an African American? Are you not rejoicing to come from a people who overcome obstacles and excel at things once not possible? Imagine Condoleeza Rice, an African American female, who is currently Secretary of State and represents the President in negotiations with world leaders. As you think of Condoleeza Rice, also imagine Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, an African American male who over fifty years ago was denied his seat in Congress due to racism. In the political realm we have made great strides since Reverend Jesse Jackson ran for president as the first serious African American candidate. Today, we have three African Americans running for governor, a sitting senator, and a serious candidate for senator in the state of Tennessee.**

**Are you not rejoicing to be an African American? Are you not rejoicing to come from a people who overcome obstacles and excel at things once not possible? In the film industry, in 1963 Sidney Poitier became the first African American male to win the Oscar as best actor. In the last five years, two additional African males have won that Oscar. They are Denzel Washington and Jamie Foxx. African Americans are excelling in other industries on stage and off stage. Sean Puffy Combs, Beyonce Knowles, Russell Simmons and Will Smith are well-known for their talent and business acumen.**

**Are you not rejoicing to be an African American? Are you not rejoicing to come from a people who overcome obstacles and excel at things once not possible? As African Americans we have overcome barriers in education, employment and housing. African Americans attend and graduate from the most prestigious colleges in the nation, serve as CEO's of Fortune 500 companies and live in the most affluent neighborhoods.**

**African Americans have rallied against racism and have succeeded. The achievements cited above, once only imaginable, are now a reality and are evidence of what we have overcome. Are you not rejoicing to be an African American? Are you not rejoicing to come from a people who overcome obstacles and excel at things once not possible?**

**CHRISTOPHER CASE  
TWELFTH GRADE PROSE WINNER  
MS. MONICA HOUSTON  
TROTWOOD-MADISON HIGH SCHOOL**

### **What We Still Must Overcome**

**I am an 18-year-old white male from a majority black high school, which I have attended since I was a freshman. People have told me that, if I expect to go to college and get a good job, I should attend a majority white high school. I don't want to go to another school because I have learned so much. I have learned what African Americans have gone through and are still going through. So many negative acts are directed against them today, just as in the past.**

**I am about to give you a look into what I see and what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. saw as areas we have to improve if we want this world to be a better place: poverty, racism and violence against one another. Each of these negative acts coincides with the others in a cycle that may begin with something as small as an argument or name-calling, but leads to violence between two or more people. In extreme cases, one of those involved could get a weapon of some kind and commit murder or seriously injure someone, which restarts the cycle.**

**Poverty, the first situation, is an unfair and major problem that needs to be dealt with as soon as possible. Poverty is unfair because it puts a negative title on someone who is not a bad person, but doesn't have the money to be part of the middle or upper class and is limited. When someone is at the poverty level, he has few choices. He can give up and stay where he is or "suck it up," deal with it, and start over to get to the middle class. That is very difficult. According to *The State of Working Ohio*, in 2005 the poverty rate in Ohio in 2005 was up to 11.6%, an increase of about 1.8% since 1980. Since that is true of a big state, then just think of the rest of the states in this country and of other countries, such as those in the Third World where a greater percentage are in need of assistance.**

**The second situation that needs to be improved is racism, which has shown its ugly head during more than one event in history. The two that you probably know about during our own time are the Holocaust and the brutal violence against African Americans during the Modern Civil Rights Movement. Each of these events showed people around the world how inhumanely people were being treated, but many chose not to help.**

**Racism has been a major issue in the United States since the founding of this country, which historically has been dominated by a settler society of religious and ethnically diverse whites. It is a concept that became significant in relation to other social groups. Traditionally, racist attitudes have been applied to Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans and some other immigrant groups and their descendants.**

**If you ask people if racism is fair or unfair, you may get different answers depending on the person's race and background. Most people will say that it is unfair as it puts people down because of their race, making it hard for them to obtain well-paying jobs. The people who believe racism is fair are majority whites, who say that their race is dominant, which means that they are the only ones who deserve the best of everything. In my opinion, all of the negative thinking and negative acts that people have done are small compared to the positives that have come to the United States. These positives include the new, more effective laws against any racist activity. Equal rights for jobs and other opportunities would not have come into existence but for all the hard times that we have faced.**

**As noted above, there is a cyclical effect among the situations that need to be improved. Racist ideas and actions lead to violence, not only during events such as the Holocaust and the Modern Civil Rights Movement, but also during our own time, with groups such as the Skinheads and American Nazis.**

**The final situation is violence. 5,570 young people between the ages of 10 and 24 were murdered in 2003 in the United States. That is an average of 15 young people each day. 82% were killed with a firearm. The following year, more than 750,000 young people were treated in emergency departments for injuries sustained due to violence.**

**Three causes of this violence are video games, families and peer pressure. Video games project violent images of people shooting other people and blowing up things. A young person whose mind is not focused on what is right and what is wrong may see these as the right things to do. In their early years and throughout their early teens, young people learn from their families how they are to act outside the home. If the parents curse, fight with other family members or hit the children, the young people think that is normal behavior. After they leave the house, they take what they have learned from these experiences and do the same thing. The cycle continues until it is broken. Peer pressure causes some teens to do violent activities to "fit in" with the friends they think are "cool." They don't want to lose their friendship and support in a tough situation.**

**Violence can start with the smallest thing, such as an argument, which leads to a fight. This leads to more violence as some people don't like to lose or just won't drop it once it is over. This can then escalate with weapons such as guns, knives or baseball bats. If the cycle doesn't end, I believe that the injury rate and the murder rate will continue to increase.**

**I believe that the United State of America is the best country in the world, but we must work harder to rid ourselves of poverty, racism, and violence. If we are to accomplish this, we will make this country a better place for everyone, not just for the few. We must remember the great leaders of the past, such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X, and what they saw as keys to a more perfect nation and**

**more perfect world. If we move away from racism and violence, I would be willing to bet that poverty would vanish from this great country and from the world.**

**In conclusion, in his “I Have a Dream” speech, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. quoted from the Declaration of Independence and said, “all men are created equal.” He meant that those rights are given to a person by the Creator when one is born. People say members of my generation are the future leaders, but when we offer our ideas for the betterment of this country and of the world, they look at us and say, “You will have your time to lead, but now it is this generation’s job.” It is like they want us to just sit back and watch. People of my generation who want to be true leaders are fed up with sitting on the sidelines and doing nothing.**

**For example, if we could offer our thoughts about what needs to be done, then I would say we need to leave the war in Iraq. This is an example of violence, which Dr. King would not support. No matter what people think, history will judge whether what we did was correct. Another thing I would do is put the people first and not settle. We can’t help everyone in the country because we don’t have the resources, but it is the choices of others that reflect what we can and can’t do.**

**A sad thing about my generation is that a lot of us are lazy and don’t care what goes on. However, there are also many young people like me who want the chance to prove that we are ready to take control and help improve the world for us and for future generations. I believe that with time and patience, more people will see the positive actions and will decide to join me in making this country the promised land not only for this generation, but also for the future generations.**