

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech is famous for its message about equality and justice. His dream wasn't just about changing laws—it was about changing hearts. He imagined a world where people wouldn't be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. He said those words in 1963, but they still echo today. His dream makes me ask myself: Who might feel invisible or overlooked around me, and what am I actually doing to show them they matter?

For the past 7 years, since 2019, I've been consistently donating to the Columbus House Homeless Shelter in New Haven. At first, when I was younger I didn't really understand much. But over time, I started noticing little things that really stuck with me. The way the staff thanked us more than once. The way someone would run their fingers over the food before carefully eating it. I still remember their smiles and uplifted eyes filled with joy. It hit me; I think they finally felt seen.

I also do a box project every year since 2019, where we work in teams to pack boxes to donate to those in need. I slowly started to realize something important. What we were giving wasn't just clothes or toothbrushes. It was dignity. Someone cared enough to pack that box with their own hands.

Every year, when I pack these boxes, I think about the person who will open them. I wonder what they've been through. I wonder if they're tired. Cold. Hoping for something to go right. I hope that when they lift the lid, they don't just see supplies—they feel remembered. Even for a moment. I hope they feel that someone believes in them.

I know I can't end homelessness on my own. But Dr. King believed that change starts when ordinary people choose to act. My dream is that no one should feel invisible or overlooked. And if even one person opens a box on a freezing night and feels a little warmth, a little hope, or a quiet reminder that they are not invisible; then every single effort matters.

Sometimes, carrying a dream doesn't mean standing in front of thousands. Sometimes, it's quietly holding a coat, a box, or a hand, and saying without words: "I see you. You are not forgotten. You are loved, even if it's just for this moment... you are enough."