

The dream of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. lives on through the stories and everyday lives of millions of African Americans across the United States. That dream was not only carried by Dr. King himself, but also by the many organizers and everyday people who came together within their communities to help lead a movement that would one day change America for the better. When ordinary Americans stood up for civil rights, even in the face of hate and discrimination, they showed our nation that change doesn't come from just one voice. It comes from the many voices of people willing to step up, organize, and take action in their own communities.

The March on Washington continues to serve as a reminder that real progress is built through the collaboration, teamwork, and dedication of our neighbors. It shows that we, the American people, have the power and responsibility to call for justice when we see it is needed. The organizers of the March on Washington motivated and inspired thousands of Americans to join together and advocate for true American freedom. They showed the world that real change comes when people listen to one another and take the steps necessary toward improving society. Their work is a reminder to all that progress requires patience, courage, and determination. While they faced many setbacks, they remained committed to building a nation where all people have equal rights and the ability to live without the worry of oppression.

I have been inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the many organizers who helped plan the March on Washington. I've come to realize that meaningful change often begins when local communities of people advocate and raise awareness about the issues affecting them. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. understood this, and his dream continues to inspire African Americans, including myself, who strive for change within our own communities.

My dedication toward uplifting and supporting my community has shaped my experiences growing up in the city of Waterbury, where issues like food insecurity and poverty face many families. As a student on the Waterbury Public Schools Superintendent's Student Advisory Council, I have had the opportunity to volunteer and work alongside Superintendent Dr. Darren Schwartz on a district-wide food drive initiative at our local grocery stores, where we garnered both support and food donations from members of the Waterbury community. These donations were loaded into large trucks and were distributed to hundreds of Waterbury families in need of groceries during the federal government shutdown of 2025 and the pause of SNAP benefits, a program that is crucial for hundreds of Waterbury families to put food on the table.

In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood." Today, I have a dream of a better Waterbury, where food insecurity and poverty are rare. I believe that just as Dr. King gained the support of Americans to achieve change, we can unite our residents to create lasting stability and opportunity for every family in our city. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy has inspired me to remain committed to continuing this work in Waterbury by organizing, volunteering, and advocating for families who deserve stability and opportunity, regardless of my age.