**January… The month to consider community service**

**Mon, January 20 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service**

Step 1: Little-known facts about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

*Directions*: All of us know about Dr. King and his commitment to the idea that, “Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve.” Below is a list of little-known facts about Dr. King. One of the items on this list is not true. Let’s all vote for the one we think is not true. Be prepared to share your point of view.

* Martin Luther King’s first name was originally Michael King.
* Martin Luther King was a billiards fanatic.
* Martin Luther King skipped two grades and entered college at 15.
* Martin Luther King loved STAR TREK. He described himself as a Trekkie.
* Martin Luther King was an accomplished cook.
* Martin Luther King was originally asked to lead because he was relatively unknown.
* Martin Luther King was arrested more than 25 times.
* Martin Luther King is one of only two Americans to have his birthday celebrated as a National Holiday.
* Martin Luther King wrote five books.

(MLK was not an accomplished cook.)

Now…think about a little-known fact about yourself that you would like to share.

Step 2: Discussion Question:

Dr. King embraced the idea that everyone should perform community service. In doing so, however, he faced many challenges while trying to make his country a better place. Aware that ideas for change come with challenges, Dr. King still felt:

*Life’s most urgent question is: What are you doing for others?*

Consider the following:

*STAR Card: K to 12 students can be change agents. For example, there is ten-year-old student Sarah Dewitz who learned about a community center’s under-funded reading room. She decided she wanted to help, she did her research, and she started a project called “Just 1 Book”. She collected thousands of gently used books for children who would otherwise not have books.*

Question: Can you think of the challenges that Sarah Dewitz might have faced as she prepared and implemented her *Just 1 Book* project?

Step 3: Local community activism

Now…think of a need in your community for which you would like to support. Your idea can be something to **collect** like starting a winter coat drive; something you could **create** like a welcoming packet for new students; something you could **change** like the time a local community center closes on the weekends; and/or something you could **communicate** to your neighbors like setting up a bulletin board to post good things happening in your schools.

Be prepared to share ideas of how it would help your community, and as was the case for Martin Luther King, what **challenges** you might face as you begin your work to do for others.

Circle the type of idea you would like to implement and briefly describe it.

| **COLLECT** | **CREATE** | **CHANGE** | **COMMUNICATE** |
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Be prepared to share your ideas and the challenges you think you might face.

Step 4: Discussion and reading lists

Consider the following question for deliberation and possible advocacy: Do you think students should be required to participate in some form of community service? Why or why not?

Suggested elementary/middle school read-alouds:

* Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen by DyAnne Disalvo-Ryan
* Carl the Complainer by Michelle Knudsen
* Each Kindness by Jacqueline Woodson
* City Green by DyAnne Disalvo-Ryan
* I Am Somebody by Nyasha Williams
* The Garden on Green Street by Meish Goldish