

Week for Peace Starts With Community Service

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Strengthening the links between social justice and community service, the 23rd annual Martin Luther King Jr. Week for Peace commences on Saturday (Jan. 17) as volunteers from Tulane, Dillard, Loyola and Xavier universities spread out across New Orleans for service projects.



A candlelight march brings representatives from Tulane, Dillard, Loyola and Xavier universities together to honor the memory of the late Martin Luther King Jr. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members on Saturday will be helping with wetlands restoration, school and neighborhood revitalization, work on the Lake Pontchartrain lighthouse and other service projects involving 20 different community organizations.

Projects for the volunteers are detailed on the Week for Peace website, where anyone interested in taking part can [register](#) for a service opportunity ahead of time.

The Week for Peace events coincide with Martin Luther King Jr. Day, marking the birth date of the civil rights leader that is observed on the third Monday in January. With rebuilding still ongoing in post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans, the theme for the week is especially pertinent: "The Dream Fulfilled in the Midst of the Storm."

Having for 23 years planned the special week that surrounds Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Jan. 19 this year), Carolyn Barber-Pierre is as determined as ever to have the celebration make a difference across the community.

The assistant vice president for student affairs who is in charge of multicultural affairs at Tulane, Barber-Pierre hopes to see 1,200 people at the Day of Service on Saturday.

"We try to come together and reflect on the life of Dr. King, on the whole idea of social justice and community service," she says. "Regardless of race, class or other social status, we can all come together for the human thing — the right thing to do."

The commemorative week's events continue on Monday (Jan. 19) on the Dillard campus with a candlelight vigil at 4 p.m. and an interfaith service at 4:30 p.m. in Lawless Memorial Chapel. A convocation on Wednesday (Jan. 21) at Xavier features a speech by civil rights activist and author Dick Gregory, as well as the presentation of a lifetime achievement award to Corinne "Lindy" Boggs, former ambassador to the Vatican and member of Congress from Louisiana. Those events will be held in the University Center Ballroom at Xavier with a reception at 5:30 p.m. and the convocation at 6:30 p.m.

Completing the Week for Peace will be "Expressions of Unity," a celebration of King's life in drama, dance and music, at 7 p.m. in Nunemaker Auditorium on the Loyola campus. See the complete [schedule](#) for additional details.

The staging area for the service day on Saturday will be open from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. and will be located in the Qatar Ballroom on the second floor of the Lavin-Bernick Center on the Tulane uptown campus. Transportation will be provided for students wanting to attend the events, with buses leaving 45 minutes before each event. Buses will be located behind the shuttle stop at Freret Street and McAlister Drive. All programs are free and open to the public. For more information, call 504-865-5181.