

Four universities, one day of service for New Orleans

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Tulane, Xavier and Loyola students work side-by-side to fill a sandbox at Homer Plessy School in the 7th Ward during last year's Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. (Photo by Cheryl Gerber)

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Students from Dillard University, Loyola University, University of New Orleans (UNO) and Tulane University will participate in the annual day of service to honor Martin Luther King Jr. on Monday, Jan. 21, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The students will dedicate their efforts to honor King's legacy by working with nonprofit groups around New Orleans.

UNO will serve as this year's host institution. Once assembled, students from the various universities will be bused to more than 20 different locations to work in unison and complete a variety of service projects with partners including City Park, Hollygrove Neighborhood Association, Youth Rebuilding New Orleans and several community-based organizations.

Students must [register online](#) to participate in the day of service.

The MLK Day of Service is the centerpiece in the annual MLK "Week for Peace," a week of activities bringing students together to learn about and commemorate the work of King.

Tulane University will also host a pair of speakers at McAlister Auditorium as part of the Week of Peace celebration, including the NewDay Distinguished Speaker and MLK Week 4 Peace Convocation by Paul Quinn College [President Michael Sorrell](#) from 6-8 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 23. The second lecture is "Eye on the Prize" by [Rev. Dr. William Barber](#) of the People's Campaign, co-sponsored by the Amistad Research Center as part of its Conversations in Color series, which will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 30, from 6-8 p.m. Both events are free and open to the public.

"In 1957 Dr. King stated, 'Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?' To see students of multiple universities in the city unite to answer that question through action for more than three decades is inspiring," said Sienna Abdulahad, associate director of Tulane's Office of Multicultural Affairs. "It speaks to our ability to come together with a common goal and have a high impact in our own community."

For more than 30 years, many of the universities in the New Orleans community have come together to sponsor an annual day of service to celebrate King's life and legacy. By 2011, more than 1,000 students from Tulane, Xavier University of Louisiana, Dillard University, University of New Orleans and Loyola University have served in various sites throughout the city.

The MLK Day of Service is one of the largest annual one-day service events in New Orleans in which college students, faculty, staff, alumni and families volunteer for a “day on” instead of taking the “day off.” This event exemplifies what King said during the civil rights movement: “The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character — that is the goal of true education.”

The collective efforts of the universities have had a significant impact on the rebuilding, renewal and sustainability of communities, especially since Hurricane Katrina in 2005. After more than 30 years of dedicated collaboration for authentic service in the city, the MLK Day of Service has become a New Orleans tradition.

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