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Martin Luther King Jr. Essay

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The Legacy

“I have a dream.” These are the most memorable four words derived from Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous speech. These four words set our country into a time of ambition and uprising from the segregation and racism that ran through the streets. They allowed little black boys and girls the ability to join hands with little white boys and girls. They entitled every citizen of America to be equal no matter of race or gender. Martin Luther King Jr. rebirthed our country into a new generation. He lit the match that would unleash a fiery storm upon the wrongdoings of the society. King not only changed my life, he changed the world.

Growing up, I was oblivious to the mistakes of the United States. I had no knowledge of slavery, or segregation. It wasn’t until my second year in elementary school when I was introduced to the man whom I wish I had the opportunity to meet. It was Friday January 17, 2003, I was a student at Westwood Elementary school in the Warren Woods Public School District. The teacher was passing around a piece of paper which had the title, MLK Day. She announced to the class that we were going to watch a quick video about this upcoming Monday and what exactly it is going to represent. The video started, white noise quickly focused to an image of a young black man, the location appeared at the bottom of the screen “Washington D.C. August 28, 1963.” The man began to speak. His voice echoed through the classroom. The praise

and encouragement of the crowd to his every word caused goosebumps to engulf my body. I was so intrigued and captured by the tone of his voice and the way the words flowed together. He spoke with such force but at the same time with love.

As I grew up, I kept both Martin Luther King Jr. and his speech in the back of my mind. It wasn't until tenth grade when I took American History that I learned the true and ungodly torture African Americans were put through. Each day of class we would dissect segregation even more. I was beyond appalled. How could the land of the free and the home of the brave, be so inhumane? Killing innocent people because of the pigment of their skin? Lynching, high-powered water hoses, and dogs unleashed upon harmless citizens was the true horror that lay behind the red, white, and blue façade. For what reason? Martin Luther King Jr. took a stand against the cruelty and harm. He gathered thousands and marched through cities to stop segregation. Non-violent civil disobedience was what he abided by to run these movements. He stood up for the equality and rights of African Americans. He risked his life to change America.

As the school years went on, I became more and more intent on learning about our history dealing with race relations. To others, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was just a day off school, but not to me. I wanted to obtain as much information as I could about the tragedy that had struck this great country. I researched King's famous "I have a dream" speech, and I would sit and read in awe. This one man, wrote this heroic speech, and led the Civil Rights Movement. Every day I am alive, I will follow by his words: "And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead." My future is untold. Whether I die tomorrow or I go broke today, I will never stop trying to succeed in this world. I will push myself to all ends to become someone, to be known. As a gay man, never will I let another human being drag me down, and treat me like I am worthless compared to them. In my life I have faced many dilemmas.

Obstacles were thrown my way but I was able to push through and make it out to be the man I am today. King paved the way for generations to come.

Today America faces a new era of segregation. On June 26, 2015, gay marriage was passed as legal in all fifty states. There was a lot of hatred and upset from many Americans saying "It's Wrong," "It's a sin," "You're going to hell!" and some even claiming this is the start of the end for this country. From King's words, he inspired me to be who I truly am, to stop hiding from others in fear of rejection, to be myself. I came out to my family and friends and was able to find happiness. There are some people who are unable to find their happiness. They are lost and don't know the way. Many teens today are afraid to be who they are due to the supposed wrong doings of gay relationships, bullying from peers, and the possibility of being ostracized from their family. But why? Why should anybody hide? I will follow in Martin Luther King Jr.'s footsteps and make a difference in the way Americans view homosexuality and same-sex relationships. I refuse to let another teenager be bullied, to let another teenager feel like there is no hope left in life and the only way out is take their own life. I refuse to let America spiral down the same road it did in the 50s. I will stand for those who have the right to be equal.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s death was a tragedy, but it was also a new beginning, a new start for the citizens of America, to rebuild from the ruins of the time we will never forget. The influence he left behind is still with us here today. It is in me, you, and everyone who believes in change. Change takes time, but it is coming. King has impacted not just these United States, but he has also impacted me. I might just be a small portion of the whole population, but I will make a difference. I will make myself known. I will follow the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.