

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day ESSAY Contest

by Alexander Liu

Two years ago, I and my family relocated to Brookings, South Dakota from Mississippi and we moved into our current house. Since then, we have really enjoyed this peaceful, friendly, and welcoming neighborhood. My brother and I have made a lot of friends; we play together, sleepover at different homes, and help each other at school. Even though we appreciate our new lives here, there are two unpleasant problems that keep annoying me.

The first problem is that some kids we do not know are disrespectful to others. For example, they sometimes curse at other kids with inappropriate words. Their words are dirty, negative, and badly hurt others. The second problem is that some teenagers keep vandalizing the park in our neighborhood. Some of them drew inappropriate images under the slides while others littered around the playground.

These problems must be solved immediately to make our neighborhood a better place so that kids can feel happier, safer, and prouder when they are playing in the neighborhood. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "The time is always right to do the right thing." So now is the right time to solve the problems.

To solve these problems, we would first report those rude behaviors and the names of the students who engaged in those behaviors to schoolteachers whenever they happen, and ask the teachers to educate those students, urging them to be more respectful and responsible. We will also invite parents from our neighborhood to be volunteers to monitor the park area and stop the words and behaviors if they are unacceptable. In the future if we see such things happen again, we will also come to them and persuade them to treat others nicely and to stop ruining this place. Furthermore, we will try to make friends with them and encourage them to join us to protect the

park equipment and keep the area clean, and make our neighborhood a more welcoming, inclusive, and supportive community.

We must take these actions now to solve the problems because these actions are the right things to do and now is the right time. More than that, we also need to persuade others to do the right things to change for the better now, because now is always the right time to make changes. “We have an opportunity to make America a better nation,” Dr. King said this on the eve of his death. Inspired by Dr. King and his various speeches, we will follow his footsteps to make our neighborhood a better place.