

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day ESSAY Contest

By Louis Liu

My favorite quote that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stated is “If we are to have peace on earth, our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Our loyalties must transcend our race, our tribe, our class, and our nation; and this means we must develop a world perspective.” This quote tells us that it is better to be united than to be separated. It is quite normal that each person has their own opinions and beliefs, and those opinions and beliefs must be respected. However, it is more important for us to establish an inclusive community that best reflects our common interest, providing protection for all community members, and promoting equality among them.

Then the question is how to create such a community? In my opinion, we can try the following ways. First, we need to provide everyone with much needed education or training opportunities for them to reach their fullest potential. Second, we need to set up an effective mechanism to incorporate different ideas, manage conflicts, and enable us to learn from our differences. Last, we should generate necessary resources to offer additional support to the people who are in need.

The financial status of a number of families in Brookings Is low. Their household incomes are below the national average and are close to the poverty line. The essential reason is that most of those families do not care about education, and they don’t even realize the importance of education. To address this issue, I and my friends will reach out to those families, explaining to them how education can change their lives, persuading parents to support their kids to get better education, and themselves to seize available job training opportunities to be qualified for well-paying jobs in local industries such as Avera, Daktronics, and Larson Manufacturing.

I also plan to work with my friends to organize workshops to enable our community members to better handle our differences and manage our individual conflicts. In those workshops, we will invite professors from the School of Education, Counseling, and Human Development from South Dakota State University to teach us fundamental and advanced conflict management skills. Every community member in Brookings, regardless of their race, their tribe, and their class, will be invited to the workshop series. It is expected that through these workshops, the Brookings residents will be able to better understand each other and be more cooperative.

In order to secure resources for the people who are in need, we will organize annual fundraising campaigns to encourage financial donations. We will also contact managers at First Bank and Trust, Avera, and other organizations for their help. An account will be established to receive the donations. A portion of the donations will be sent to the low-income families based on their need; the remaining portion of the donations will be used to enhance local facilities.

I believe through these methods as well as other effective measures, we will be able to transform Brookings to a better place by transcending our limitations and developing a world perspective among this community.

Dr. King sacrificed his life serving others and seeking equality and human rights for African Americans, the economically disadvantaged, as well as all victims of injustice. As a second-generation American from a minority group (in 2023 Asians only take up to 1.44% of the South Dakota population), I am living a happy life with my loving family, receiving excellent education and equal opportunities in school, and enjoying friendships with my schoolmates of different genders, races, and ethnicities because what Dr King did. I will carry on Dr King's legacy and continue to fight for what is right, and strive for what is just, and to find within itself the spirit, the sense of purpose, that can remake a nation and transform a world.