

## **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service**

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### **Lexington and Central Kentucky**

**January 21, 2009**

Inspired by Dr. King's dream of equality and his idea that everyone can be great because everyone can serve, the Central KY Association of Volunteer Administrators (CKAVA) King Day of Service Committee is striving to create opportunities for people to come together to strengthen their communities through service and become empowered through volunteerism. The goal of promoting volunteering and community service on the King Holiday is timely given the current state of affairs in our country. The news these days is full of stories of economic difficulties; people being laid off and budgets getting cut. Non-profit organizations are going to be seeing a greater need for their services as more and more people are hit with economic hard times. We hope as more and more families begin to feel the economic downturn they will be compelled to give their time and talents to their favorite charity if they are no longer able to write a donation check.

The King Day of Service 2009 was the second year of this concerted effort in the Central Kentucky area. Representatives from CKAVA, The Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service, Transylvania University, Bluegrass Chapter of the American Red Cross, RSVP of the Community Action Agency, Senior Companion Program of the Bluegrass Community Action Partnership, Campus Compact AmeriCorps VISTA and Omicron Delta Kappa came together to give momentum to this national service movement. We also partnered with a whole host of organizations to bring opportunities for service to the people of our community. The following groups and organizations were instrumental in making the 2009 King Day of Service a resounding success:

Delta Sigma Phi of Transylvania  
Knights of Columbus of St Paul & St Peter Partishes  
Woodford Humane Society  
Hope Center  
East 7<sup>th</sup> Street Center  
Kidney Health Alliance  
Love on a Leash  
citizensCREATE!  
Independent Transportation Network  
Godsnet  
Catholic Action Center  
Southeast Child Development Center  
Lexington Humane Society  
Asbury College  
Harmony Christian Church  
Christ Church Apartments  
Delta Delta Delta of Transylvania  
PB&J Club of Transylvania

LexFusion and Transylvania University  
Mr. Newton's 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies Class at Leestown Middle School  
Lexington Theological Seminary/Home At Last Animal Sanctuary

In addition to the service projects happening all over Lexington the planning committee took on a large, signature project for 2009. With lots of help from the Red Cross, the Transy Delta Sigs and the Knights of Columbus, 600 emergency preparedness kits were assembled and distributed to senior citizens in congregate living facilities in downtown Lexington. In addition, Red Cross volunteers provided free training in emergency preparedness to any interested resident.

Another addition to the 2009 line up of events was the inclusion of a "Celebration of Service". This evening of food, fun and reflection was sponsored in part by Omicron Delta Kappa National Honor Society with the help of Councilperson Andrea James of the 1<sup>st</sup> District. In addition to audio and video recordings taken by the KY Historical Society/KY Folklife Program headed up by Director Bob Gates, there were opportunities for volunteers to reflect on their day of service through art and written activities. We were all entertained by the music and dancing of the Capoeiro Brazilian Martial Arts group and the smooth sounds of Shade, both of which volunteered their time and talents to make the evening a special one for everyone.

In all, we had **23 projects**, nearly doubling the number from the 2008 event. We more than doubled the number of volunteers with **over 540** friends and neighbors out making a difference and helping others.

Some additional outcomes of the day included:

- 111 letters of support written to members of the armed services
- 75 "Dream" bags decorated for children
- 554 snacks packaged for the Hope Mobile
- 600 emergency preparedness kits created and distributed to the seniors living in the congregate facilities in downtown Lexington
- 165 seniors trained by Red Cross volunteers on emergency preparedness

We also saw an increase in the support from the business community. Meijer's and Target both provided donations of gift cards and Ale 8 One and Pepsi helped by providing drinks for the evening celebration. St. Joseph Hospital purchased the first aid kits for the emergency preparedness kits. And one lucky volunteer went home with a gift basket provided by Buffalo Trace Distillery.

Media coverage included radio spots on Real Life Radio and Christian Radio and coverage of the King Day project at the East 7<sup>th</sup> Street Center by WTVQ Channel 36. Lexington's signature project was spotlighted on NPR with Dwayne Edwards being interviewed. The events were also listed on a variety of web sites and small, community newspapers.

**Members of the planning committee included:**

Miles Phelps, Committee Chair – RSVP Community Action Agency and CKAVA Member  
Karen Anderson – Transylvania University and CKAVA Secretary  
Ashley Gutshall – Campus Compact AmeriCorps VISTA and CKAVA member  
Genny Friend – Transylvania University Student  
Melissa Newton – The Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service and CKAVA President  
Janet Gates – Senior Companions Program at Bluegrass Community Action Partnership  
Molly Marsh – Omicron Delta Kappa  
Dwayne Edwards – American Red Cross Bluegrass Chapter  
Andrea James – 1<sup>st</sup> District Councilperson

**Goals of the planning committee for the 2010 King Day of Service include:**

- Increasing the number of committed members to the planning team including someone that can act as a leader for a sponsorship group
- To begin planning earlier and with more deliberation
- Find ways to partner with the other MLK events happening around Lexington and Central Kentucky
- Another large signature project and fun and exciting evening celebration
- More media coverage; something on each local TV station and in the Herald Leader
- 40 projects
- 700 volunteers
- Community needs met and relational bridges built through a shared service experience
- Offer technical assistance to any community wishing to increase participation in the King Day of Service