



We Must Act Now to Change the Future

Mario James, Jr.

Third Place (4th & 5th Grade)
Golda Meir School, Grade 4

If Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were alive today I wonder what he would think. Would he think his dream was still alive? Would he think people are treated fairly? Would he think people are judged by the content of their character?

I think Dr. King would think that we are doing some things right and some things wrong. I think we do a good job of judging people by the content of their character but we could do better. I think we are doing a better job at treating people nice but we could do better. Sometimes we treat each other with respect but sometimes we don't. One of the biggest problems we have today is that people don't know how to talk about their problems. They blame each other. Sometimes they kill each other.

We must act now to change that. Everybody has to be part of the solution. Parents need to teach their kids how to solve problems. Schools need to teach kids how to solve problems. Kids can help each other too. We can talk to each other. Kids will be better when they grow up if they learn how to solve problems when they are kids. We must act now to help the world and to change the future. Maybe we can change adults and maybe we can't change adults. But we can change kids. Kids have more time to learn new stuff. Kids can help keep Dr. King's dream stay alive. Kids can do anything. Sometimes adults don't have the time to. We need to start with the kids.

If we don't act now everything will keep getting worse. We can't let things get worse. Right now we need to change the future.



We Must Act Now to Stop Violence

Timari Robinson

Second Place (6th Grade)
Metcalf School, Grade 6

Dr. King said " We must act now," and I would like to focus on three different actions. The topics of murders, racism, and violence need to be acted upon. To me these are some very important things that really need to be fixed in Milwaukee.

The murder rate in Milwaukee is very, very high, it has gone down since the 1980's but that's because the murder rate was crazy high then. One thing that has blown my mind is that it isn't just the people that are killing each other it's the police killing them too. Just the other day two policemen killed two teens who had a gun. Did the teens fire the gun or pull out the gun on the cops? No they didn't. It doesn't just hurt the teens it hurts their parents and community too.

I picked racism because I've seen a lot of this in my life. Racism has been around for forever and the one thing that really hurts me a lot about racism is that it has happened to me and to other loved ones in my life. I remember being only 10 years old and being looked up and down when I would walk into stores or restaurants. Black people have been disrespected for centuries. My nana was a little girl during the segregation with Martin Luther King, Jr. She would not be able to attend the school that I could go to now. I remember her sharing how she couldn't drink out of the same water bubbler as white people. While she had been disrespected I have worked to make friends of different races.

There has been too much violence in Milwaukee. Shootings, robberies, and car thefts happen daily. I live where there are lots of shootings. I hear them all the time and it is terrifying. It sounds like an explosion. Recently, there was a robbery down the street from my school. People would rather go to jail than get a job. We all need to work together and watch out for each other.

There is too much violence and racism happening in Milwaukee. It is going to take years of working together to fix these issues. We need to begin action now for a better future. Act now for you, your family, your friends and community.



We Must Act Now For A Better World

Talya Jagers

First Place (6th Grade)
Hartford University School, Grade 6

Taking action takes a lot of courage and guts. It is very important to take charge regardless of race or religious beliefs. It's not just black people that should get equal rights. The whole world deserves equal rights. Everybody deserves to be treated how you would want to be treated. Which is why we must act now.

There is absolutely way too much gun violence, gambling, death, just everything! I can't even walk to a corner store that's two blocks away from my house without an adult to take me! That's ridiculous! At night sometimes I hear gunfire and my dad screams: "Get down!" Who wants to do that when they can be going to bed peacefully? Nobody should ever want that in their life.

We must act now and end the killing and fighting. I am sick and tired of going to funerals and hearing that somebody died whether you are related to me or not. Every day I wake up, I thank god that I get to live another day because I know that my life can end quickly. Killing somebody makes the situation worse because you go to jail and you would have to look at yourself in the mirror knowing that you ended someone's life. For what? All that did was get you in jail. We must start using our words. Using your fists does absolutely nothing.

We must act now and end racism and looking down upon people's religious beliefs for everybody. There is not only racism going on with African-Americans. It goes on EVERYWHERE! If I practiced Buddhism, I should still be treated as a normal person. If I was Asian, I should be treated no different than other people. Nobody should be looked down upon because of what they look like or what they believe in.

Taking action does not mean doing the biggest thing possible. If you see somebody getting bullied about their race, gender preference, or what they believe in, and you say stop, or that's not cool, or how would you like it if the situation was reversed, that would be taking action. We must act now and make this world a much safer and better place.



We Must Act Now Akia Robey

Third Place (6th Grade)
Hartford University School, Grade 6

"We must act now!" Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. fought for equality. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was committed to achieving freedom, and human dignity. His determination to peace, justice, and equality inspires me mostly because I experience racial inequality and/or racism on a daily basis. No matter if it's towards blacks or whites. "We must act now," here are some reasons why.

The first reason why we should act now is because there is even starting to be what I personally call 'black on black crime.' We say "Black Lives Matter," well why are other blacks taking them? We must act now for all racial inequality, not just blacks. Black lives matter, well so do Hispanic, German, and all other lives matter also.

We must act now. This is because there are innocent citizens being brutally murdered. This needs to stop. I'm tired of going to funerals and seeing my loved ones in caskets. These caskets are being filled because America has too many "second class citizens." Hearing those words are starting this racist crime and killing.

Every citizen is a first class citizen no matter their race. America should remain a first class nation forever. We should have no second class citizens. Everyone is equal, right? Then shouldn't everyone be treated like they are? The worst part about this tragedy is that no one is doing anything about any of it. We need better role models for our youth. Role models that will actually take action and at least try to make America a safer and more equal environment for ALL people that are made fun of, teased, and tormented because of their race. America needs role models to stand up and speak their minds. This is a serious issue if no one even tries to solve or address this, then sadly it will only get worse and increase dramatically. Racism should have never been experienced. I don't want generations to come after me to have to go through this and be hurt and heartbroken because of ignorance. I've already been to a number of funerals in my lifetime I don't want to attend any more. If America does not act now against social discrimination and racial inequality then there will be no justice or peace in our nation.

WE MUST ACT NOW FOR Peace, Justice, Dignity, Equality, And a First Class Only Nation.

We Must Act Now For Equality

On September 6, 1960 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, if America is to remain a first-class nation, it cannot have second-class citizens." Three years later, Dr. King addressed the nation on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. He said that in the year 1963, the situation had become more urgent and should not be overlooked. Dr. King made it very clear that 1963 was only a beginning and he was right. Fifty-two years later, we still have not achieved equality for all people. We must act-now to end this inequality.

In the Milwaukee Area, inequality is seen in many different forms. Many people use stereotypes to judge people unfairly. Stereotypes affect everyone. I would like to give an example of a situation that occurred recently in our community. In October, a professional basketball player wanted to shop for a watch for his father. He decided to go to a jewelry store in a suburban area. When he arrived at the store, the store employees locked the door, would not let him in, and called the police. After the police arrived and determined that it would be safe to let him in, the employees were still afraid to let him in. The police officers seemed to be annoyed with the store employees. The owner of a store across the street was interviewed by a reporter from WTMJ radio a few days later. He felt very upset that a potential customer felt unwelcome. He also said that the unfortunate situation makes all of the other stores in the area look bad. The store owners in that neighborhood pride themselves on welcoming all customers. In this case, negative stereotypes affected everyone and caused another example of inequality. If we want this to stop, we must act now!

Educational opportunities are another example of inequality in our area. Kids in the city of Milwaukee should have the same opportunities that kids in the suburbs have. If they don't, doesn't that make them second-class citizens? In many suburbs, they are building new schools or are renovating the old ones. Most of the schools in the city of Milwaukee are old and need to be repaired, but there is not enough money to do that. Schools in the suburbs often have more teachers to help kids improve their reading and math skills. In most Milwaukee schools; the classroom teachers have to teach their own intervention groups. Isn't it easier for kids to work in smaller groups and get more individual attention? The kids in the suburbs have a better chance of improving their skills because they work in smaller groups. We must act now to make sure that all kids have the same educational opportunities.



We Must Act Now For Equal Rights

Talbot de St. Aubin

Second Place (7th & 8th Grade)
Golda Meir School, Grade 8

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "If we are to be a first-class nation, we cannot have second-class citizens." When he said this it applied mostly to the racism in the country and the discrimination that caused, but now there are many different kinds of second-class citizens. Three examples of this are college students who are unable to vote, people living in poverty, and people who cannot be themselves.

In society today there are people who are scammed out of voting. How can we be a great country if people are not given the rights they deserve? Everyone should be allowed to vote yet some people, such as college students, are having a rough time doing this. Polls used to be located on campus so that it was easy and convenient for students to vote, but now some are being moved far away. Some polls now require a photo ID from that state, which most college students from other states do not have. So citizens of our nation are unable to contribute to our society the way they should be able to.

Another group that is treated unfairly are poor people. Almost every day we see poor people on the streets, sometimes we know they are poor and sometimes we do not. Either way, they are not getting the help they need. The government, along with all of us, should help the people who are less fortunate than us. We should give them food, clothes, education; everything they need. They deserve that much! Yet we simply walk past and allow them to stay in the same situation they are in. Why would a nation help some, but leave others to fight for themselves?

We still have discrimination in the United States, even if it is not as obvious as it used to be. America is trying to block immigrants out, but why should they get less opportunities than all of us? All humans should get the same chances but they do not, and blocking people out is preventing even more people from getting those chances. Some Americans are also being hateful towards gay and lesbian people, but why should they not be able to love who they want?

These people are not doing well by themselves, so how are we all supposed to be good together? They are citizens of the United States and should be treated as such. If Dr. King were here today he would be fighting alongside these people to get them the rights they deserve, but since he is not here, we should fight for them. We must act now and make our country better for all of its citizens!



Mia Rimmer

First Place (9th & 10th Grade)
Rufus King International School, Grade 9

Every day, it surrounds you. It's printed with fabric dye on some stranger's t-shirt, inked onto a giant billboard ad for a sports team, or even tucked into the layers of someone's hair. Just recently on Halloween, it was evident in almost every chain retail store in America- hanging neatly on a shelf covered in plastic wrap and cardboard. You might even partake in it without realizing the damage you're causing; the damage that's cultural appropriation. Cultural appropriation is negatively adopting attire, views, more than just blatantly dressing as another race (i.e. black facing) - much more than many don't perceive to even be making a mockery of someone else's cultural background. We must act now and eradicate the practice of cultural appropriation in America.

Cultural appropriation shames the power of other races and gives off false equality that profits the dominant group in the appropriation. For example, the term 'color blindness' has begun to be used more and more frequently - meaning that the individual saying it views that there is no separate races; that we're all simply humans. Despite the term's positive intent, it does more harm than good. The term takes away the value of one's individuality and cultural pride - if we're all one, all circumstances that uplift a certain race or heritage will be diminished to meaninglessness and the clothing or rituals held sacred to the person's ethnic background will be invalidated and disrespected. This allows people of all heritages to use meaningful symbols and trends because it is stylish rather than purposeful. America's history of exploitation and oppression of minorities is long and horrid. Appropriating their cultures is making a mockery of their pasts, and showing that

Samantha Hantsche

First Place (7th & 8th Grade)
Garland School, Grade 7



It's Our Time Paola Meraz-Garcia

Third Place (7th & 8th Grade)
Longfellow School, Grade 7

Our time is now. It's our time to fix our society. It's our time to not let it fall into wrong doings. It's our time to save our generation and to create better futures. It's our time to act now! It all starts with you! Be the first to take a stand and lead the world. It's our time to create a better place to live in.

One of the problems that is faced everyday is racism. It happens everyday, and everywhere. Too many people face this everyday just for being who they are. You shouldn't be picked on because you are yourself. This is not fair. In fact nearly every person has experienced racism and that is why Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is a figure example of a person who fought for our rights and didn't allow this to happen to him, his family, his community, or his people.

I can relate to racism and I'm pretty sure you can too. Racism plays a roll every single day in my life. It happens before I even wake up, and the state is the one playing racism that has morphed into my life. I come to an MPS school and racism is played every day because suburban schools receive more money because most of them will graduate and students in MPS can't even graduate high school, at least that is what they say. I am a very good student, I have good grades, and I should have the same chances that suburban children do. I should be able to have the same education because I value it and want the best out of it. Education is the solution to life, it helps you find a career and it helps you stay out of problems in life. It helps children become good citizens. That's the number one goal for every country, raising young children to become good citizens and make the best out of life.

People think that they are better than others and it causes problems and hating between so many people, they don't value what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. fought for. People need to realize that he stood up and thought everyone was alike, we might physically be different but internally we are all the same. We all need to stop the hating and appreciate what we all bring to this world.

I think every child deserves to have the same education and have the same chances as suburban students do. All schools should receive the same amount of money to support childrens education, to create great future leaders. Remember to be the first to stand up and lead others. It's our time!

We Must Act Now For Respect