



City of New Bedford
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor

City of New Bedford
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P R E S S R E L E A S E

New Bedford's Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Remembrance Celebration Sunday, January 15, 2017

New Bedford, Massachusetts- Mayor Jon Mitchell is pleased to join with the Greater New Bedford Area Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee in welcoming the public to attend the "Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Remembrance Celebration." The celebration will be held on Sunday, January 15, 2017 from 4:00-5:30 P.M. at the Pilgrim United Church of Christ at 635 Purchase Street in New Bedford.

"Each year at this time we come together in New Bedford as a community to celebrate Dr. King's message of peace and unity. We are strongest as a community when we set aside our differences and find common ground and that's what I hope we can reflect upon this holiday," said New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell.

Dr. King was an integral part of the Civil Rights Movement which laid the foundation for the theory and practice of inclusion and diversity in American society and around the world. Though he was assassinated in 1968, Dr. King's dream lives on, touching the hearts and minds of people throughout the world.

The theme for New Bedford's 2017 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Remembrance Celebration is "# MLK Then and Now- Words for a new generation" and was selected by the committee as it continues to cultivate the millennial generation in civic engagement and civil rights. "We have chosen a keynote speaker that has a strong connection with the millennial generation although we believe that he will engage and inspire all ages," said lead event organizer Marci Pina-Christian.

The 2017 keynote speaker will be Toyan (TJ) Harper. He is the Massachusetts Conference's new Associate for Racial Justice Ministries. Harper operated a racial justice summer program for teenagers in Chicago and the San Francisco Bay Area that assisted hundreds of area youth and prior to that worked with the Strive Together Foundation, a network dedicated to improving educational outcomes for children.

Other program highlights include musical selections by the Deliverance Gospel Choir along with a community choir and student vocalists from New Bedford Public Schools. The program will also include the announcement of the 2017 Annual Essay Contest winners—a special feature of the annual event for the last 10 years. Dori Rubbico will provide a special vocal performance to complete the program.

All are encouraged to attend the program. For more information contact Marci Pina-Christian or the Department of Community Services at (508) 979-1464.

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