

26th Annual Ashland Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr Holiday Celebration



Congratulations on another great Martin Luther King Celebration. Our theme was “1964–2014 50 Years of Striving toward Freedom and Justice- a Work in progress” and our inspirational quote was: “The arc of the moral universe is long but it bends towards justice” – Dr. King. Big thanks to all the folks who have been meeting over the past few months to plan this celebration and everyone who came on the day of to enact it.

Once again people lined up outside of the building where we has volunteers greeting, gathering the canned goods for donation to Ashland Food Project and Mosaic’s clothing drive for the Maslow Project. Big shout out to Mosaic, a mentoring project run by an AmeriCorps volunteer at SOU connecting high-school and university students. The American Red Cross held a blood drive across the street at the Umqua Bank parking lot until 3pm. Ashland high-school volunteers set up a chalkboard with artwork and prompts for people to write their dreams for a better tomorrow outside the Armory.

As people were seated a video presentation on the importance of the Civil Rights Acts played on the large screens. Designed and edited by Emcee DL Richardson and Ben Cobb, the video featured speeches from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Presidents Kennedy and LBJ, and pictures from Ashland in the 1920’s featuring Klu Klux Klan marching down the streets to today with a diverse crowd marching down the street.

Acting company member Jerome Preston Bates kicked us off on the right note beginning the piece “An Invocation of Names” featuring Martin Luther King quotes and the names of social justice and human rights workers provided by members of the community. Phoenix Sigalove

provided music and Mary Ann Dyer from the Rogue Valley Peace Choir played drums. The 30 speakers came from the different acts and around the community. Thanks to John Rose, Peter J. Kuo, Darcy Danielson, Timothy Rubel, Britney Simpson, Jeremy Thompson, Sharnae Mouton, Ben Baden, Betsy Bishop, Susan Chester, Promise, Christian, Kyanna, Kelsie, Viri, Oneal, Tom Ridgely, Rodney Gardiner, Jennifer, Sarah, Jade, Shawn Traub, Angel, Kate G, Hannah, Mariana, Bailey, Jada, Sienna, and Sarah M.

Walker Elementary School students sang "Separate But Equal" and "He Had a Dream" both from *Overcoming Segregation* a musical the fourth grade performed last Friday, January 17th as a part of Walker's annual civil rights march reenactment and MLK celebration. The students were led by their instructors Jennifer Parks and Debi Blair.

Crater Renaissance Academy students led by teacher Matthew Reynolds, performed a multimedia dance and spoken-word piece that responded to the questions -Does the Gettysburg Address still have relevance in America today? What parts of it apply to our society now? Would President Lincoln be satisfied with the progress America has made since the Civil War?

Ballet Folklórico Ritmo Alegre danced to a song called "Casas de Carton" (Cardboard Houses). Written in the 70's about Latin American shantytowns and the extreme poverty and sadness of the people who by economic injustice were forced to live with almost nothing. It comments on the paradox of the wealthy business owners who paid such miserable salaries and cared so little for the people. The song became extremely popular in Mexico and is still recognized as an anthem for the oppressed.

Rogue Valley Gospel Group led by Shawn Traub sang a gorgeous version of Desree's "You Gotta Be".

This was followed by a rocking excerpt from *The Last Year in the Life of Martin Luther King* a rock operetta written by Waterwell. The show takes inspiration from the legendary speeches, interviews, and private notes of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and shines new meaning on the obscured history of his last days. Tom Ridgely, who directed the New York production, is this year's Phil Killian Directing Fellow and. Rodney Gardiner, member of Waterwell, is in his fourth season at OSF, sang the part of MLK.

Keynote speaker, Kayse Jama, an original founder of Center for Intercultural Organizing, was born into a nomad family in Somalia. He left when the civil war erupted, and finally found sanctuary in Portland. From 2005 to 2007, he trained immigrant and refugee community leaders in five Western states—Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Utah and Idaho—under a prestigious New Voices Fellowship at Western States Center. He has been awarded the Skidmore Prize for outstanding young nonprofit professionals (2007), the Oregon Immigrant Achievement Award from Oregon chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (2008), and the 2009 Lowenstein Trust Award, which is presented yearly to "that person who demonstrated the greatest contribution to assisting the poor and underprivileged in Portland."

Ashland Dance Works choreographed by Aisha Wand gave an exciting closing number dancing to The Sound by Mary Mary.

The SOU Black Student Union led a march to the Plaza where we were greeted with song by the Rogue Valley Peace Choir. We then listened to the I Have a Dream Speech broadcast for us all to hear.

Thanks to the planning committee! Those who attended just a few meetings and those who attended all. Alma Alvarez, Ben Cobb, Cassandra Phillips, Cassie Fetty, Chris Wood, Claudia Alick, Cynthia Maclaren, Darryll Richardson, Donya K Washington, Gina DuQuenne, Julie Cortez, Kevin Bendaw, Marvin Woodard, Michelle Zundel, Nicole McCauley, Paul Collins, Peter R. Wickliffe, Preston Moser, Rebecca Cecil, Robert Goodwin, Treasa Cordero, Lissa Roberts

Thanks to Sandy Phillips for designing the t-shirt and new poster with Craig Stewart and Paul Collins. Thanks to our sign interpreters for donating their time and talent. We are proud to say our deaf audience was larger than ever and we will keep working to make our events accessible. Ashland Printfast; maintenance of our banner: Deluxe Awning Company; Sign Interpretation: SOU's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program and sign interpreters; T-shirt Vendor: Rock Island Designs; Video assistance: Ashland Home Net, Rogue Valley Community Television at SOU, and our live streaming crew; Chair transportation: Matt Damon; BSU, Hawaii Club and all of our volunteers.

Thanks to our sponsors and supporters: Ashland Chamber of Commerce (Sandra Slatterly, Dana Fortmiller, Katherine Flanagan, Kelsey Holderness); Ashland School District, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Southern Oregon University, Jefferson Public Radio, City of Ashland, Don Hill and SOU Media Services for the use of equipment for MLK amplified speech, Alan DeBoer for donating the use of the Armory, Randy Voris Armory audio and lighting technician, Shop n Kart for donated supplies, and Martolli's Pizza for feeding the planning committee.

2014 Ashland MLK Day Celebration

Press

KTVL: http://www.ktv1.com/shared/news/top-stories/stories/ktvl_vid_10891.shtml (also video)

Daily Tidings:

<http://www.dailytidings.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=%2F20140121%2FNEWS02%2F401210303%2F-1%2FNEWS01>

KOBI5: <http://www.kobi5.com/component/zoo/item/many-gather-together-in-ashland-to-honor-martin-luther-king-jr.html> (also video)

The Siskiyou: <http://siskiyou.sou.edu/2014/01/22/ashland-celebrates-martin-luther-king-jr/>

<http://siskiyou.sou.edu/2014/01/24/axiom-brass-returns-after-mlk-day-performance/>

Mail Tribune:

<http://www.mailtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20140117/TEMPO/401170301>

Video

RVTV: <http://rvtv.sou.edu/2014-mlk-celebration-ready-to-view/>

Photos

Graham Lewis: http://www.flickr.com/photos/graham_lewis/12080407015/in/set-72157640028887345

Al Case: <http://traveljapanblog.com/ashland/tag/ashland-martin-luther-king-jr-holiday-celebration/>

Jenny Graham: <https://photos.osfashland.org:9443/> (may only be accessible with OSF log-ons and on campus)

Mail Tribune:

<http://www.mailtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/gallery?Site=MM&Date=20140120&Category=MEDIA01&ArtNo=120009998&Ref=PH&Presentation=desktop>

ASHLAND'S 26th ANNUAL DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. HOLIDAY CELEBRATION MARKS 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

December 20, 2013 at 3:24pm

News Release

December 20, 2013

2014 celebration highlights work still to be done to realize Dr. King's dream

Ashland, Ore. — The 26th annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Celebration in Ashland returns to the Historic Ashland Armory (208 Oak St.) on Jan. 20, 2014, from noon to 1:30 p.m., featuring a variety of tributes to Dr. King and his enduring legacy through music, spoken word, and dance. The Armory event will be followed by a march to the Ashland Plaza and the traditional re-broadcast of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech.

This year's free celebration coincides with the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, prompting the theme: "1964–2014: 50 Years of Striving Toward Freedom and Justice — a Work in Progress." Kayse Jama, executive director of the Portland-based Center for Intercultural Organizing, will serve as keynote speaker. D.L. Richardson, professor of journalism at SOU, will act as Master of Ceremonies.

In addition to the Civil Rights Act anniversary, this year's inspiration comes from a quote commonly used by and attributed to Dr. King, which was inspired by the words of 19-Century abolitionist minister Theodore Parker. "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice," Dr. King said in the "Keep Moving From This Mountain" speech in 1965.

"It's important for us to gather as a community to inform ourselves if where we are, remind ourselves of where we'd like to be, and inspire ourselves to get there," says Claudia Alick, a leader of the celebration's planning committee.

The event is free, but those attending are asked to bring a non-perishable food item for donation to the Ashland Food Project. Clothing donations are also being collected by Mosaic at Southern Oregon University. Please note that seating is always limited and available on a first-come basis. The doors will open at 11:30 a.m., however, each year the event reaches standing room only by 12 noon. All ages are welcome, but parents are urged to stay with their children during the event. A livestream of the event will be provided at Standing Stone Brewery (101 Oak St.) for audience members who cannot fit inside the Armory, as well as online at Ashlandhome.us/.

The observance of the slain civil rights leader's birthday is produced by a group of community volunteers and will feature performances and appearances by Oregon Shakespeare Festival

company members, local students, community groups, and more. The event is sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and supported by Ashland School District, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Southern Oregon University, Jefferson Public Radio, PrintFast, Martolli's Hand Tossed Pizza, the Historic Ashland Armory, and the City of Ashland.

Also on Monday, Jan. 20, the American Red Cross will hold a blood drive in Ashland from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. The bloodmobile will be parked at Oak Street Plaza (310 Oak St.). All eligible donors are asked to schedule an appointment to donate blood by calling 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visiting redcrossblood.org.

For more information visit **Ashland Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Celebration** on Facebook. Photos from last year's event are available at http://www.flickr.com/photos/ashland_chamber/sets/72157632579696567/.

More on Kayse Jama: An original founder of CIO, Kayse Jama was born into a nomad family in Somalia. He left when the civil war erupted, and finally found sanctuary in Portland. From 2005 to 2007, he trained immigrant and refugee community leaders in five Western states — Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Utah and Idaho — under a prestigious New Voices Fellowship at Western States Center. He has been awarded the Skidmore Prize for outstanding young nonprofit professionals (2007), the Oregon Immigrant Achievement Award from Oregon chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (2008), and the 2009 Lowenstein Trust Award, which is presented yearly to “that person who demonstrated the greatest contribution to assisting the poor and underprivileged in Portland.” Learn more about CIO at <http://www.interculturalorganizing.org/>.

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