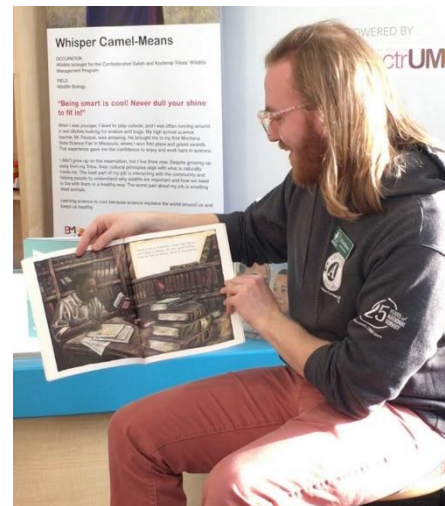




Campus Compact  
Montana

## MLK Read for Peace

MLK Read for Peace is a service project that honors the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by placing college students, faculty, staff, community volunteers, AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors in kindergarten through fifth-grade classrooms. These volunteers and service members read students age-appropriate books about Dr. King and reflect on his legacy with a guided activity. The event helps spread the message of Dr. King among elementary school students throughout Montana, helps build connection between schools and colleges, and keeps support teachers as they share the message of striving to be a more equal and just society.



The impact of Dr. King's work and life on American history isn't always a central part of elementary curriculum. Although some schools enjoy a long weekend in observation of Martin Luther King Jr., Day every January, the significance of this day and the history of the civil rights movement is not always well understood. Additionally, having a guest in the classroom, especially one who's devoted a year of their life to service to the community, can be a fun way to share part of Dr. King's legacy.

MLK Read for Peace provides students with information about Dr. King and simple activities they can complete over the weekend, which may be displayed in a prominent community location.

**Each Year volunteers and National Service Members engage over 4,000 students in many Montana communities.**

### Coordinating an MLK Read for Peace event in your community

It is best to begin coordinating an MLK Read for Peace project as early as possible. Use the following timeline as a guide for beginning different stages of the planning process.

- 1) Pick a date to host MLK Read for Peace:** We recommend you host your MLK Read for Peace the Friday before the three-day MLK weekend, if possible. Before selecting the day, look at the local school calendars and discuss with folks in your community. This makes the information more relevant to students and gives them extra time to work on their activity.

2) **Select a school or district in your community to host the event:** Identify one or more elementary schools in your community who may be interested in the event. Contact the principals with your idea. They will be able to tell you any screening requirements for volunteers in the district, and they can also get information about the event to teachers. For your first year, try to keep the number of schools relatively small. In Missoula's first year, only 25 volunteers served in five schools, but they reached more than 500 students.

3) **Identify a place in the school or community location where you can display the student activities:** We recommend contacting local organizations and businesses to highlight the work of your community's young people. In Missoula, students artwork and poems have been displayed at the main Public Library branch for the whole of February, which is Black History Month. Other options for display include the school itself, or a downtown display sponsored by your Chamber of Commerce or an art display at the mall.

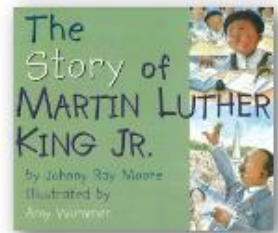
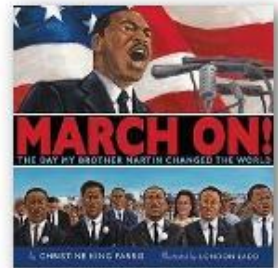
4) **November: Contact teachers/schools to sign up classrooms for your event** Reach out to local school administrators or contacts for guidance on how best to reach K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers. Use provided template to collect the following information:

- School name (if you are hosting the event at multiple schools)
- Teacher's name and e-mail
- Grade
- Number of students in the classroom (for activities and reporting)
- Time the teacher would like the volunteer to come (The event takes 45 to 60 minutes, depending on student questions) Whether or not the teacher would like to combine classrooms with another teacher for the event. If yes, be sure to find out who the other teacher is and how many students are in their class.

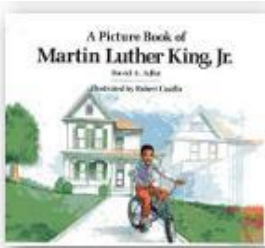
5) **Locate (or order) books for volunteers:** Check with teachers and school librarians about what books the school already has and get recommendations about age-appropriate books about Dr. King. As teachers sign their classrooms up for the event, you will be able to determine how many books you need at each school. **MTCC has donated the MLK books to the school library for the last few years, so they should have them available.** A list of suggested books is available on pages 7 and 8.

**Free!** MLK books may be available to communities in need of age-appropriate MLK books. Contact your AmeriCorps Senior Leader if you need books.

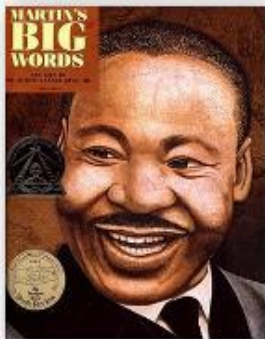
6) **Select or design the activities for your event:** The activities for your event should help students reflect on the ideas of peace, equality, the civil rights movement, and racial discrimination. These are common themes of books about Dr. King's life and work. MTCC staff and AmeriCorps Leaders have researched and developed curriculum which includes: **Pre, Post and Day of Activities.** The curriculum will be available on the Montana Campus Compact Read for Peace website so volunteers and teachers can download in preparing for the Day of Service. Example activities: A drawing and a poem. The drawing activity is typically used in younger classrooms students, and the poem is used with older (3-5<sup>th</sup> grade) students. You can find examples and blank copies of these activities at the back of this packet.



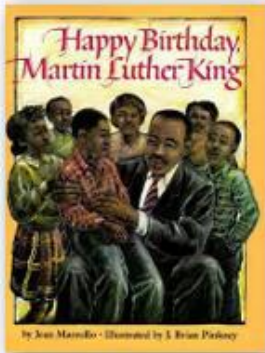
**7) Recruit and schedule volunteers:** Work with local volunteer organizations to find experienced, committed volunteers for your event. If available, reach out to local colleges or universities for student volunteers. Examples of college student volunteers are local athletic teams, student senate members, clubs, education students and volunteer organizations. This provides a tremendous opportunity for local students to give back to their community by way of Read for Peace. Consider recruiting AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Big Brothers Big Sisters, afterschool programs, fraternities and sororities are great resources for volunteer recruitment. Invite your local representatives such as the Mayor, City and County Council members as well to volunteer. These VIP's help to highlight National Service in your communities, but also help with earned media exposure.



Because AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Senior members are required to participate in MLK Day of Service, they often constitute the large part of MLK Read for Peace readers. Teachers may also have regular classroom volunteers who would like to work with that particular class. When you begin recruitment, let teachers know they can pass the information on to any parent or community volunteers they know. Consider using online tools when recruiting and scheduling volunteers. Google Docs will allow you to create a spreadsheet with available classrooms and times that volunteers can easily enter their name into. Also remember that some school districts may require volunteers to undergo further registration and/or screening.



**8) Deliver activities and instructions (and books if necessary) to schools:** Work with the school secretaries to set up a system where your volunteers can check in at the front desk of the school on the day of the event and pick up their book, instructions and activities. Use the classroom sizes you collected from teachers to ensure you have enough activities. Remember, if more than one volunteer will use the same book, let the secretaries know and make sure to leave instructions for each individual volunteer that includes the name of their book. If you will borrow books from the school library, ask the librarians to have the books available at the front desk for volunteers the day before the event.



**9) Host your event:** Select one or two people to be in charge of activities on the day of the event. Volunteers may not show up, books may not be returned to the front desk for the next class, and a class may decide to join another at the last minute. Designating one or two point people to handle these problems will help the event run smoother and keep things moving. A few members of your organization may volunteer to be back-up readers, books can be quickly tracked down if you have the contact information for volunteers and

teachers, and extra copies of activities can be made easily at the schools. With good preparation, your MLK Read for Peace event should go off without a hitch.

**10) Reporting:** Part of participation in Read for Peace includes reporting the impact of your local project. This helps us to be able to share your good work and continue to receive funding in the future. Designate an individual to serve as the reporter for your local project.

**11) Ensure student artwork is displayed:** Depending on what you determined for displaying artwork (either at the school, or at another location in the community) you will need to follow up with teachers to ensure the student work gets displayed, or collect and display the artwork and then return it. We recommend displaying at the school if possible. Once you have your activities on display, be sure to spread the word.

## Press Release Tips

Let the media know about your event! You can send a press release a couple weeks before you plan to host your MLK Read for Peace. Here are some things to keep in mind and include in your release:

Keep it short and concise. Press releases should fit on one page and have short paragraphs. Don't send it too soon. Your event is most likely to pop up on the media radar if you send your release about two weeks before the event. You can send a follow-up copy of the release the week of the event as well.

Pack the release with details. Include information about which schools are participating, how many classrooms, the total count of students and the total number of volunteers involved.

Find a good quote. See if someone in your organization can work up a quick, compelling quote about the importance and impact of this event.

**Remember to include Montana Campus Compact, AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps Seniors in the press release.**

Please spread the word well. Aside from traditional newspaper and TV station media, send your release to local radio stations, public broadcasting networks, independent and Internet media, and even university media.

## MLK Day of Service Resources

The Martin Luther King Jr. holiday is an official day of service and celebrates the civil rights leader's life and legacy.

Visit <https://americorps.gov/newsroom/events/mlk-day/mlk-day-resources> for more information:

- Communications and Social media toolkits
- Logos:



## Montana Campus Compact – MLK Day Read for Peace Website

[Montana Campus Compact - MLK Read for Peace Webpage](#)

On this page you will find:

- Pre, post and Day of curriculum (coming December 2021)
- Tips to conduct Read for Peace in your community
- Media/Press Release Tips
- MLK Day of Service Opportunities and more...

## Teacher Email Template

Hello [Name],

I am writing to invite you (and your students!) to participate in Montana’s Annual MLK Read for Peace event. Read for Peace is a statewide service project that places volunteers in kindergarten through fifth-grade classrooms to read students age-appropriate books about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as well as lead them through an activity about peace and equality. Artwork created during Read for Peace can be displayed in your hallway, or in a central place in your school!

This year we have engaging activities that span several different learning styles. Participating teachers will choose the activity they feel would be most effective for their students:

- NEW: Pre, Post and Day of Activities** – to expand the learning opportunity beyond one day of service, MTCC staff have developed curriculum for teachers to use 1) before to introduce the subject and MLK’s legacy; 2) after for reflective activities for after Read for Peace. The curriculum will be available for teachers to download from the MTCC website in December: <https://mtcompact.org/mlk-read-for-peace/>.
- VIRTUAL OPTION:** In 2021, MTCC AmeriCorps Members offered a virtual MLK Read for Peace which was very successful. If needed-due to COVID restrictions, our volunteers could join your class virtually. Please reply to this email to learn more about a virtual option.
- I Have a Dream Drawings** – a free-form art activity where students will draw their dream for a better world. The activity will begin with a short introduction to MLK’s I Have a Dream speech, informing students that MLK dreamed of a better world where all people got along and were treated as equals. Students will then be given a blank sheet of paper and 10 minutes to draw their dream of a better world. Through this activity youth are given the chance to think about the world in which they live and the role equality plays in quality of life.
- Peace Poems** – a structured writing activity where students will write a poem about what peace is to them. They will be given a poem worksheet to use where they insert their own words to finish phrases such as “Peace is like a \_\_\_\_\_”, but may choose to write a free-form poem if they wish. Students will have 10 minutes to write their poems, followed by an opportunity to present their poem to their peers. Through this activity youth are given a creative outlet to express their ideas and are able to reflect on the teachings of MLK and what it means to truly have peace.

The impact of Dr. King’s work and life on American history is not always a required part of elementary curriculum. Although some schools enjoy a long weekend in observation of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day every January, they may not understand the significance of this day. A collaborative event between the



Montana Campus Compact, AmeriCorps and Montana communities, MLK Read for Peace provides college student volunteers, community members and National Service participants the opportunity to spread the message of Dr. King for elementary school students throughout our state. Each year MTCC reaches around 4,000 students with Read for Peace statewide! Consider having us join your classroom in 2022!

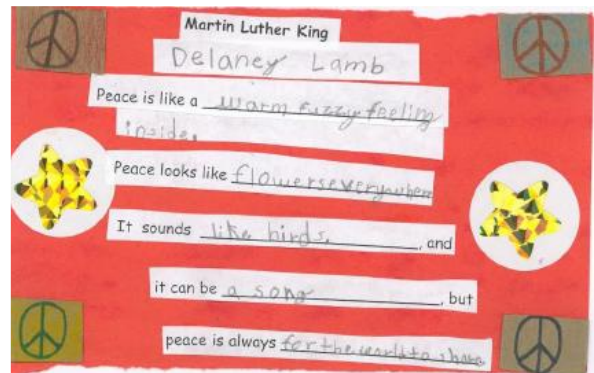
I have attached a potential book list, volunteers will read one book per classroom. This event is [ENTER DATE—note some schools are have MLK Day off, so check with the schools]. We would love to spend 45-60 minutes in your classroom. Please let me know if you would like to participate in this fun and engaging event, and if you know of any other teachers at [ENTER NAME] School be interested. If your school or classroom library has a book on the list, please set it aside.

I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your time!

[Member Name]  
[AmeriCorps Leader or VISTA Member]  
Montana Campus Compact  
[Host Site]  
Phone#; email

## Sample Activities:

**Peace Poems** – a structured writing activity where students will write a poem about what peace is to them. They will be given a poem worksheet to use where they insert their own words to finish phrases such as “Peace is like a \_\_\_\_\_”, but may choose to write a free-form poem if they wish. Students will have 10 minutes to write their poems, followed by an opportunity to present their poem to their peers. Through this activity youth are given a creative outlet to express their ideas and are able to reflect on the teachings of MLK and what it means to truly have peace.



**I Have a Dream Drawings** – a free-form art activity where students will draw their dream for a better world. The activity will begin with a short introduction to MLK’s I Have a Dream speech, informing students that MLK dreamed of a better world where all people got along and were treated as equals. Students will then be given a blank sheet of paper and 10 minutes to draw their dream of a better world. Through this activity youth are given the chance to think about the world in which they live and the role equality plays in quality of life.



## Read for Peace Suggested Book List

### *A picture book of Martin Luther King Jr.* **Grade: 1 and up**

- A brief, illustrated, biography of the Baptist minister and civil rights leader whose philosophy and practice of nonviolent civil disobedience helped American blacks win many battles for equal rights.

### *My Daddy, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.* **Grade: preschool -3**

- What was it like growing up as a son of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? This picture book memoir, *My Daddy, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* by Martin Luther King III, provides insight into one of history's most fascinating families and into a special bond between father and son.

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

Martin Luther King III was one of those four little children mentioned in Martin Luther King's groundbreaking "I Have a Dream" speech. In this memoir, Martin Luther King Jr.'s son gives an intimate look at the man and the father behind the civil rights leader. Mr. King's remembrances show both his warm, loving family and a momentous time in American history.

### *Happy Birthday Martin Luther King Jr.* **Grade: Preschool -3**

- This book is a beautifully-rendered study of Martin Luther King Jr.'s life, told in simple, straightforward language for even the youngest of readers to understand. Pinkney's scratchboard and oil pastel illustrations convey both the strength and gentleness of King's character. Both text and art carry his central message of peace and brotherhood among all people.

### *\*NEW\* Kamala and Maya's Big Idea* by Meena Harris **Grade: Preschool-3**

*A big idea:* they would turn their empty apartment courtyard into a playground!

This is the uplifting tale of how the author's aunt and mother first learned to persevere in the face of disappointment and turned a dream into reality. This is a story of children's ability to make a difference and of a community coming together to transform their neighborhood. While not specifically about Martin Luther King Jr., this book features a childhood Kamala Harris, an historic modern figure, and part of the legacy of Dr. King's dream coming to fruition.

### *Martin's Big Words* **Grade: K and up**

- This picture-book biography is an excellent and accessible introduction for young readers to learn about one of the world's most influential leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Doreen Rappaport weaves the immortal words of Dr. King into a captivating narrative to tell the story of his life. With stunning art by acclaimed illustrator Bryan Collier, *Martin's Big Words* is an unforgettable portrait of a man whose dream changed America-and the world-forever.

*My Brother Martin* **Grade: 1-6**

- "Mother Dear, one day I'm going to turn this world upside down."

Long before he became a world-famous dreamer, Martin Luther King Jr. was a little boy who played jokes and practiced the piano and made friends without considering race. But growing up in the segregated south of the 1930s taught young Martin a bitter lesson -- little white children and little black children were not to play with one another. Martin decided then and there that something had to be done. And so he began the journey that would change the course of American history.

*My Dream of Martin Luther King Jr.* **Grade: 1-2**

- Faith Ringgold had a dream about Martin Luther King. Simply narrated in her own voice, Ringgold--award-winning creator of *Tar Beach* and *Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky* paints a vivid, powerful picture of King's childhood and strong family life, along with glimpses of prejudice, segregation, and protest. Her vision blurs dreamily into King's adult life--from his family, to protests of Rosa Parks's arrest, even to his assassination: "This time we had come to mourn Martin Luther King's death by trading in bags containing our prejudice, hate, ignorance, violence, and fear for the slain hero's dream. We emptied the bags onto a great pile, and as the last bag was dumped, the pile exploded into a fire so bright that it lit up the whole world. There, emblazoned across the sky, were the words: EVERY GOOD THING STARTS WITH A DREAM." Illustrated with Ringgold's dramatic folk-modern paintings, *My Dream of Martin Luther King* is one of the most creative, successful, accessible tributes to Martin Luther King for children that we've seen. (Ages 4 to 8) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

*I've Seen the Promised Land* **Grade: Preschool-3**

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is one of the most celebrated figures of the twentieth century. Set against key moments of the civil rights movement, here is the story of the powerful, eloquent spiritual leader and his belief that nonviolence could be used to overcome racial discrimination.

Walter Dean Myers's moving narrative and Leonard Jenkins's compelling paintings convey a vivid and striking image of the man who moved American society closer to the ideals of freedom and fairness. Dr. King's dream that all Americans would be judged by their individual actions and character is one we still cherish today.

*My Uncle Martin's Big Heart* **Grade: Preschool-3**

- In this inspiring story about Martin Luther King Jr.—told from the perspective of his young niece—readers will gain personal insight into one of the most influential figures of the twentieth century. As Angela Farris Watkins introduces children to her uncle, she presents them with a rare glimpse into his life at home, including special family moments. What unfolds is a story of character and service to God, family, and mankind, and of how one man's extraordinary love changed the history of the United States.

Told with visually stunning art by Eric Velasquez, this is a perfect book for Black History Month and Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and throughout the year.

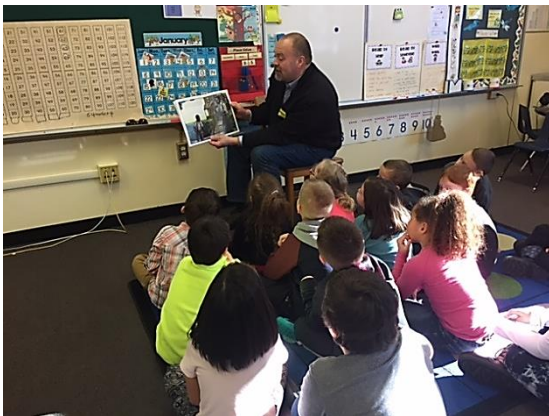


## Coordinate Event using Excel Spreadsheet Design

Google Sheets (or Excel) is a great way to coordinate schools, volunteers and more. Add tabs as needed. Contact MTCC to have a sample excel sheet emailed if needed, or use the guidelines below.

School	Email	Teacher	Grade	Room#	Time	Time in min.	# students	Volunteer	Vol. email
Paxson	mfox@...	Ms. Fox	3 <sup>rd</sup>	200	11:30-12:30	60	23	George Smith	smithg@...
#schools: calculate yourself					<b>TOTAL Hours</b> ↙↘	Use formula to count hours: =SUM(G3:G(last column #))/60	Use formula to count students: =SUM(F3:F(last column#))	<b>TOTAL Students</b> ↙↘	#volunteers calculate yourself—look at column number and subtract title columns

Invite local Representatives to read to the Kids. Mayor John Engen, Missoula, MT is pictured below at Russell Elementary School in Mari Benders first grade classroom.



# Have Fun!

Take photos & remember the AmeriCorps 'A'!