

CLUW Celebrates MLK Day

Today we honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the movement for Civil Rights by calling out the injustices happening in our world: The murder of Renee Good amidst the terrorizing of immigrant workers and their families across our country, the unilateral misuse of military force on civilians of other countries, the stripping away of rights for workers and protections of our safety on the job and protections for our planet. As Dr. King implored: We must be "drum majors for justice, peace and righteousness."

Dr. King recognized the need for economic justice in order to achieve racial equality. He said, "We look around every day and we see thousands and millions of people making inadequate wages. Not only do they work in our hospitals, they work in our hotels, they work in our laundries, they work in domestic service, they find themselves underemployed. You see, no labor is really menial unless you're not getting adequate wages. If you're getting a good (wage)...that isn't menial labor. What makes it menial is the income, the wages."

As we reflect back, we remember that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was an early and dedicated supporter of women's rights. He took a strong position in favor of contraception — not very common among preachers in the South at the time. He supported Planned Parenthood and agreed to serve on a committee to study contraception. Dr. King recognized that the path to economic justice would have to include "an understanding of and easy access to the means to develop a family related in size to "community environment" and "income potential."

Throughout his life Dr. King consistently noted the lessons he learned from women. Coretta Scott King led demonstrations of Black mothers on welfare against the Vietnam war — becoming the backbone of Dr. King's historic Poor People's Campaign. Dr. King marched with women workers who were underpaid and overworked, and he helped organize women who were denied equality and who were victims of oppression.

We must continue in honor of Dr. King's legacy by getting back onto the streets, standing up in our workplaces, and organizing our communities against racism, against sexism, against injustice and injury to our coworkers and neighbors. "We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

CLUW will continue to stand in strong support against these injustices to ensure that rights are protected and respected!

In Lasting Unity,

Sylvia J. Ramos

President,
Coalition of Labor Union Women