Common Ground:

It Starts with Me – Beloved Community
WHEREAS, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was born in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1929; and

WHEREAS, he earned undergraduate degrees from Morehouse College and Crozer Theological Seminary, and a doctorate from Boston University; and

WHEREAS, in the mid-1950s, King embraced the struggle for civil rights, following the teachings of Mohandas Gandhi and emerged as an influential proponent of organized, nonviolent activism; and

WHEREAS, in 1955, King was among those who planned and participated in the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which ended with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that segregation on public buses was unconstitutional; and

WHEREAS, King, together with other civil rights advocates, founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1957 to organize the action of local protests groups throughout the South; and

WHEREAS, after being jailed during a march to bring attention to integration efforts in Alabama, on April 16, 1963, King wrote his famous “Letter from Birmingham Jail;” and

WHEREAS, King, as president of the SCLC, along with leaders from other civil rights organizations, organized the August 28, 1963, March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, which drew more than 250,000 participants and was a steppingstone to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and

WHEREAS, during that march, King delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech; and

WHEREAS, in 1964, King became the youngest person ever to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize; and

WHEREAS, in 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed a bill creating a U.S. federal holiday, to be observed on the third Monday of every January, honoring King’s birthday; and

WHEREAS, the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission will honor the legacy of Dr. King on January 13, 2022, with a special program in Columbus, Ohio, and the theme will be “Common Ground: It Starts with Me – Beloved Community,” reflecting the imperative of community to addressing remaining barriers to eliminating discrimination;

NOW, THEREFORE, We, Mike DeWine and Jon Husted, Governor and Lieutenant Governor of the State of Ohio, do hereby recognize

**MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY**

on this 17th day of January 2022.

[Signature]
Mike DeWine
Governor

[Signature]
Jon Husted
Lieutenant Governor
Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission Members

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Elizabeth Blount
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Columbus

Christina Rodríguez
Toledo

Tracey Winbush
Youngstown
January 13, 2022

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 37th annual Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission Commemorative Celebration. The Ohio MLK Holiday Commission sponsors this event each year to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The theme of this year’s celebration is “Common Ground: It Starts with Me – Beloved Community,” reflecting the imperative of community to addressing remaining barriers to eliminating discrimination. Dr. King sought unity through a message of equality that emphasized our common humanity as well as each American’s individual role in bringing change. The power to make a difference starts with each of us and strengthens when we come together with one collective voice.

In the continuing spirit of Dr. King’s commitment to lifting the oppressed and service to others, the Commission annually honors Ohioans who work to promote diversity and eliminate discrimination through peaceful methods. Today we will recognize three Ohioans and three organizations who embrace the power of both the individual and the community to unite us all in the pursuit of justice and equal opportunity.

This event typically features outstanding Ohio youth orators from the Commission’s annual Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Statewide Oratorical Contest. The competition was canceled due to the pandemic last year, but we look forward to returning the tradition of hosting exceptional Ohio youth orators on April 29. During today’s celebration, we’ll instead enjoy spoken word performances from TRANSIT ARTS, a Columbus city youth arts development program.

A special thank you to Governor Mike DeWine and Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted for supporting the Commission’s work to honor and carry forward the legacy of one of the most consequential leaders of our time.

Thank you for joining today’s celebration.

Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission
J. Averi Frost is a champion of minority-owned businesses. Her dedication to the success of Black businesses is described as reflecting Dr. King’s principles of non-violence and economic justice. In nominating her for the Individual Award, Frost’s nominator referenced Dr. King’s advice on the night before his assassination to do business with Black-owned businesses.

Frost is Executive Director of the Central Ohio African American Chamber of Commerce (COAACC) and founder of Microcosm Community Improvement Corp., which advocates for Black-owned businesses in central Ohio.

Frost has spent most of her career supporting Black and minority-owned businesses, accumulating accolades for her advocacy and vision that “… have been an asset to the Black-owned business community she has worked to build and empower.”

She worked for several years with the Ohio Minority Business Assistance Center (MBAC) developing programming for small and minority business owners and helping them strategize for success. Prior to her work with the Columbus MBAC, she was on staff at the Central Ohio Minority Business Association.

Frost began leading COAACC in 2018 and in 2020, she began also working for the Columbus Urban League, leading the Minority Small Business Resiliency Initiative that works to connect businesses with resources. As head of the program, she has expertly applied her extensive knowledge in support of Black and minority-owned businesses during an especially challenging time.

“As often as not, the most effective form of advocacy is through information and education,” added her nominator.

“Dr. King’s historical significance as a Civil Rights leader and advocate for racial, social, and economic justice is made more profound when young leaders, generations removed, continue the work in unique and creative ways. Ms. Frost’s commitment to the success and sustainability of Black-owned businesses is helping to build a strong economic base for the entire community. She is helping all of us learn to define economic justice in new and innovative ways.”

Frost has been involved in several social causes, including serving as President of the Steering Committee of Black, Out, & Proud, Inc.; Board member for the Community Capital Development Corp.; Board Chair for Mothers Helping Mothers, Inc.; as well as fundraising efforts for the American Cancer Society. She is a Columbus native and graduate of Denison University.
The mission of the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. The organization welcomes all without exception, and with a commitment to strengthening and uniting diverse communities.

“Both on a local level and nationwide, the Y is on a journey to become an anti-racist, multicultural organization that values human diversity in all its forms and actively opposes racism by connecting and educating people and mobilizing community action,” said the organization’s nominator.

Through collaborations with community and national partners, the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati launched the Better Us Initiative in 2020 as an embodiment of its mission to serve all. The initiative, which unifies the organization’s approach to racial equity work and aligns these efforts to its mission, began with a review of current offerings and a vision to expand its reach. Examples of this work include:

- **UNDIVIDED**: The YMCA collaborated with the local nonprofit LivingUNDIVIDED on the UNDIVIDED program, which “takes participants on a six-week journey to racial healing and solidarity.” Each cohort included 30 participants and highlighted the voices and experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. The program was offered to YMCA staff, members, and community organizations and partners to reach as many as possible.

- **Teen programs**: A relaunch of teen programs focused on racial and gender equity to support Boys and Young Men of Color. Included are a civic engagement program inspiring interest in state and local politics, activism and organizing, and political transparency and integrity; Black and Latino Achievers, a college-/career-readiness program providing students with the tools to develop social-emotional capacities and identify career paths; and 1:1 Reach and Rise Mentoring, a program using a therapeutic mentoring model to provide teens of color with individual mentoring, case management resources, and trauma-informed mental health counseling.

The organization’s nominator notes its mission’s connection to Dr. King’s dream of equal rights through nonviolence.

“At the core of our mission lies the understanding that strengthening and uniting communities is the most important work we can do. We operate community centers where folks from all walks of life – differing in race, age, socioeconomic background – come together to learn, grow, and thrive.”

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**Organization Award**

*Award criteria: Nominees must be organizations that have made significant contributions toward building a sense of unity among Ohio citizens. Nominees must have used Dr. King’s vision of nonviolent social change to successfully bring people from diverse backgrounds together to build a better community and advance equity.*
Collaborative Effort Award

Award criteria:
Nominees, which may be any combination of individuals, communities, businesses, or other organizations, must collectively have made significant contributions toward building a sense of unity among Ohio citizens. Nominees must have used Dr. King’s vision of nonviolent social change to successfully bring people from diverse backgrounds together to build a better community and advance equity.

Central College Presbyterian Church, located in the Columbus suburb of Westerville, is a predominantly white congregation founded in 1843, and Trinity Baptist Church, founded in 1924, is a predominantly African-American congregation located in an urban area of Columbus.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and a period of racial unrest in the country and in Columbus, the two congregations partnered to provide ministry to the community, reflecting the cultural awareness of Dr. King’s philosophy of the Beloved Community, according to the churches’ nominator.

Under the leadership of Dr. Victor M. Davis, pastor of Trinity Baptist, and Dr. Malcom Davis, pastor of Central College, and with the support of ministry staff, leadership, and volunteers, the churches provided food, household items, and school supplies to those in need for more than a year.

A financial grant from Central College allowed Trinity to deliver enrichment, cultural activities, and educational support for youth in Columbus City Schools. The program was supported with volunteers from students enrolled at The Ohio State University and members of the two congregations. The two churches also held simultaneous Bible studies that addressed racial tension and inclusion and concluded with the two pastors exchanging pulpits and preaching.

“The Beloved Community is a global vision, in which all people can share in the wealth of the earth,” said the churches’ nominators. “In the Beloved Community, poverty, hunger, homelessness, bigotry, and racism will not be tolerated because the international standard of human decency will not allow it.”

Dr. Malcom Davis  
Central College Presbyterian Church  
Westerville

Dr. Victor M. Davis  
Trinity Baptist Church  
Columbus
Tyric Drane
Cleveland

Tyric Drane is known as a bridge builder and role model to young residents in Cleveland’s Central neighborhood where he was raised. A 2019 graduate of East Tech High School in Cleveland and currently a junior at Bethany College, Drane’s nominator describes him as the epitome of the King principle that the Beloved Community is the framework for the future.

“Since his early days, Tyric Drane has realized the importance of community and nonviolence. Growing up in a neighborhood where nearly 70% of residents live below the poverty line, Tyric has witnessed more than his share of community challenges and violence in his young life.”

These challenges strengthened his resolve to make a difference in his community. Even though he attends college out of state, Drane returns home to give back, working over the summer with the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland. In this capacity, Drane engages in grassroots advocacy. He worked on the Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund’s government affairs task force supporting nonprofit organizations dealing with the ongoing effects of the pandemic. Drane and another intern compiled research, conducted informative interviews, and assisted in communications between organizations and fund members.

Drane volunteers regularly for community service projects and serves the Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland by mentoring students in afterschool athletic programs and speaking to high school seniors about the importance of building community relationships. He also helped gather input from often-excluded community members to help inform the design of the new St. Vincent Charity Medical Center Health Campus in his neighborhood.

“He recognizes the need to uplift the fact that Cleveland’s Central neighborhood is a community full of resources and that he is an example that you are bigger than your circumstances,” added his nominator.

A high school and college football player, Drane is one of only seven Bethany College football players to make the 2020-21 President’s Athletic Conference Academic Honor Roll. His interest in a career in athletic training stems from his own experiences and he aims to help young athletes reach their highest potential.

Dawn Glasco, Manager of Engagement and Social Innovation for Cleveland Central Promise Neighborhood, lauds Drane for his vision and leadership that sets an example for other young people to follow.

“His discipline as an athlete, student, mentor, and leader serve as a light to all around him. Tyric is destined for a life of greatness and joy because his generosity will continue to reap him many rewards.”

Youth: Capturing the Vision of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Award

Award criteria: Nominees must have been 20 or younger on Nov. 30, 2021. Nominees must exemplify leadership, nonviolence, commitment to excellence, and interracial cooperation. Nominees must have demonstrated an adherence to one or more of Dr. King’s Six Principles of Nonviolence, which are:

1. Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people.
2. The Beloved Community is the framework for the future.
3. Attack forces of evil, not persons doing evil.
4. Accept suffering without retaliation for the sake of the cause to achieve the goal.
5. Avoid internal violence of the spirit as well as external physical violence.
6. The universe is on the side of justice.
G. Michael Payton spent 35 years in public service, including 18 years as the Executive Director of the Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC). Before retiring in 2019, Payton led a statewide staff of 80 employees supporting the commission’s mission to promote “positive human relations amongst Ohio’s diverse population through education and enforcement of laws against discrimination.”

His nominator described him as engaging and collaborative, with strong dedication to the OCRC, its staff, and the citizens he served. During his time at OCRC, Payton led unprecedented statewide education and outreach initiatives and oversaw an enhancement of the OCRC’s case investigative process. Payton was also instrumental in the creation of the OCRC’s annual MLK Jr. Art and Multimedia Contest, Ohio Civil Rights Hall of Fame, and the Columbus Bar Association’s Annual MLK Jr. Civil Rights Symposium, among other accomplishments.

Payton began his career with the State of Ohio in 1984 as an Assistant Attorney General in the Civil Rights section where he prosecuted civil rights cases and served as counsel to the OCRC. He served in the Attorney General’s Office for 11 years, including as Assistant Chief of the Transportation Section, where he provided legal counsel to the Ohio Dept. of Transportation (ODOT). He also served as ODOT’s Real Estate Administrator. Then at OCRC he served in legal and operations capacities before becoming Executive Director.

Payton earned his bachelor’s degree in political science from The Ohio State University and his Juris Doctorate from Georgetown University Law Center.

He is the recipient of numerous awards, including a 2003 U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission award for innovative initiatives in education and outreach related to employment discrimination. He is a 2007 recipient of the Ohio Conference NAACP’s Civil Rights Vanguard Award; a 2008 recipient of the Fair Housing Advocates Association’s Keeper of the Dream Award for fair housing advocacy; a 2010 recipient of the NAACP Toledo Chapter President’s Outstanding Civil Rights Award; a 2013 recipient of The Ohio State University’s Alumni in Government Distinguished Service Award; a recipient of the 2017 Ross County Chapter of the NAACP President’s Award for commitment, dedication, and leadership; a 2019 Ohio Senate resolution recognizing exemplary service; a 2020 recipient of Equality Ohio’s Honored Ally award; and a 2021 inductee into Cambridge High School’s Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame.

“For over 30 years, Mr. Payton has used his positions in public service to champion civil rights, diversity, and inclusion,” said his nominator, who went on to praise Payton for seeking to support “those who were in most need of a voice.”

“Although Director Payton retired in December 2019, his legacy continues to be vibrant within state government. I cannot think of an individual who had done so much for others and embodies the spirit of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. than G. Michael Payton.”
A Collection of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Quotes

“Science investigates; religion interprets. Science gives man knowledge, which is power; religion gives man wisdom, which is control. Science deals mainly with facts; religion deals mainly with values. The two are not rivals.”
“A Tough Mind and a Tender Heart” sermon, Aug. 30, 1959

“We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor, it must be demanded by the oppressed.”
Letter from Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963

“Intelligence plus character — that is the goal of true education.”
“The Purpose of Education,” 1947

“If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.”
Address to students at Spelman College, April 1960

“We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right.”
Letter from Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963

“We must walk on in the days ahead with an audacious faith in the future.”
“Where Do We Go from Here?” address, Aug. 16, 1967

“Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love ... violence ends up defeating itself. It creates bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the destroyers.”
Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, Dec. 10, 1964

“Love is the greatest force in the universe. It is the heartbeat of the moral cosmos. He who loves is a participant in the being of God.”
From a rare handwritten letter he penned in the mid-1960s

“One day we will learn that the heart can never be totally right when the head is totally wrong.”
From Strength to Love, 1963

“Be a bush if you can't be a tree. If you can't be a highway, just be a trail. If you can't be a sun, be a star. For it isn't by size that you win or fail. Be the best of whatever you are.”
Speech to students at Barratt Junior High School in Philadelphia, Pa., Oct. 26, 1967

“We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy.”
“I Have A Dream” speech, Aug. 28, 1963

“If we are to have peace on earth, our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Our loyalties must transcend our race, our tribe, our class, and our nation; and this means we must develop a world perspective.”
Christmas sermon on peace, 1967
Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission

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Save the Date
April 29, 2022
Statewide MLK Oratorical Contest
King Arts Complex
867 Mount Vernon Ave.
Columbus, Ohio 43203

For more information, visit das.ohio.gov/mlk.