

NEWS

VOLUNTEER CENTER OF BERGEN COUNTY, INC.

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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service

North Jersey—Make January 19, 2015 a day “on”, not a day “off”.

That was the intent when, in 1994, Congress passed the King Holiday and Service Act, designating the Martin Luther King Holiday as a national day of volunteer service. Instead of a day off from work or school, Congress asked Americans of all backgrounds and ages to celebrate Dr. King’s legacy by turning community concerns into citizen action.

“Dr. King’s passion and commitment to ideals continue to inspire us as Americans,” says Janet Sharma, executive director of the Volunteer Center of Bergen County. “The King National Holiday is a wonderful opportunity to re-dedicate ourselves to our core beliefs through service to others.”

“We encourage people and organizations throughout our community to participate in service activities as a tribute to Dr. King,” continues Ms. Sharma. “Some ideas for projects might be helping a neighbor, getting a space painted, having closets or pantries organized, or sponsoring a collection of items an agency may need and distribute to the community, such as food, office or school supplies, baby or children’s products.”

“If you work with seniors, ask a group of teens or members of a community organization to come in and organize a puzzle party or a social event. All these projects can help an organizations while celebrating the tremendous legacy of Dr. King,” continues Ms. Sharma.

The Volunteer Center of Bergen County has several on-going direct service programs that are in need of volunteers throughout the year.

Mentoring Moms are volunteer women who serve as friends and role models to isolated, overwhelmed mothers in need of guidance in parenting, managing households, providing for their children or overcoming other obstacles. Call (201) 489-9454 Ext. 123, to become a Mentoring Moms volunteer.

The Mentoring Youth program consists of adult men and women who serve as caring mentors, friends and role models to troubled, abused or neglected children, helping youth to see a positive future, and breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect. Call (201) 489-9474 ext/115 for more information about Mentoring Youth.

The **Chore Service** provides crews of volunteers who perform minor home repairs that help elderly or disabled persons remain safe in their homes. These minor, yet essential repairs are those that clients can neither do for themselves nor get anyone else to do. Contact Chore at 201-489-7790.

“We hope people in and near Bergen County will continue this upward trend of service, and continue to seek out volunteer opportunities that enhance and improve our communities,” says Ms. Sharma.

Additionally, the Volunteer Center will be collecting donations of back packs, toiletry items, winter outerwear, bottled water, and gift cards to Walmart, Shop Rite, McDonald’s, Subway, and Pizza Hut, to be distributed to homeless veterans and homeless youth in the area during the week before the Martin Luther King Holiday, January 12-15 from 9 am to 4 pm; with evening hours Thursday, January 15 till 7 pm, at its offices at 64 Passaic Street in Hackensack. For a full list of needed items or to make a monetary donation to help the veterans and the teens, go to the Volunteer Center’s website at www.bergenvolunteers.org.

Call 201-489-9454 for information on this project and for more ideas on how to observe this day, performing service to the community. For additional information on how people are volunteering nationally, visit www.mlkday.gov

The Volunteer Center of Bergen County strengthens the community by connecting people through service and developing civic leaders.

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