

# 44th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Community Celebration

Manchester Memorial High School  
1 Crusader Way  
Manchester, NH 03103



Presented by the Martin Luther King, Jr. Coalition  
January 19, 2026

## *Uplifting Resistance through Community*

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Coalition, has organized annual observances of Dr. King's birthday since 1983. Its members include diverse local organizations dedicated to carrying on Dr. King's work to end racism, eliminate poverty, and promote peace through active nonviolence.

**\*ASL Interpretation provided by UNH - Manchester**

[www.MLKNH.org](http://www.MLKNH.org)

# Program

**11:00-12:45** Partner information tables open,  
Art project Community Day of  
Service project (BAPOC)

Music provided by the Manchester Memorial  
High School Jazz Band, Directed by: Tim Russell

**12:15-12:45** Food tables open

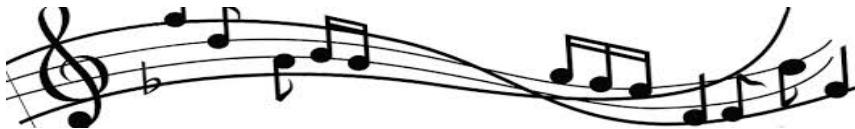
**1:00-3:00**

- Greetings: Maxine Mosley- Chairperson MLK Jr. Coalition
- City of Manchester Greetings: Mayor Jay Ruis
- Emcee: Grace Kindeke, NH Center for Justice & Equity  
2023 MLK Jr. Award
- Invocation: Rev. Heidi Carrington-Heath, Interim Chaplain to Phillips Exeter Academy
- Land Acknowledgement and Moment of Silence:  
David Holt- Welcoming NH
- Pledge of Allegiance: Liv Crete-Sayer, 5<sup>th</sup> grader from Boscawen Elementary School. 2026 NH Kid-Governor-Elect
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day Proclamation from the Governor's Office:  
read by Liv Crete-Sayer
- Recognition of elected officials in attendance
- MLK Jr. Community Choir: "Lift Every Voice and Sing"  
Directed by: James McKim
- Vanessa Washington-Johnson Bloeman Award:  
Representative Alice Wade Presented by: Sebastian Fuentes
- Musical selection: Queen City Youth Choir:  
Co-Directed by Susan Wilkes & Adam Boroskas
- 2026 MLK Jr. Award: The Honorable Melanie Levesque  
Presented by: Olivia Zink
- MLK Jr. Community Choir: "We Shall Not Be Moved" arranged by  
Adam and Matt Podd. Directed by: James McKim
- Panel discussion: Uplifting Resistance Through Community  
Facilitator Anthony Poore: NH Center for Justice & Equity  
Panelists: Dr. Dottie Morris: 2019 MLK Jr. Award  
Manchester Alderman Jason Bonilla  
Rev. Robert Thompson

**3:00** Closing activities

- Call to Action- James McKim and Grace Kindeke
- Community Singing of "We Shall Overcome": led by James McKim

# We Shall Overcome



We shall overcome  
We shall overcome  
We shall overcome, some day

**REFRAIN** Oh, deep in my heart  
I do believe  
We shall overcome, some day

We'll walk hand in hand  
We'll walk hand in hand  
We'll walk hand in hand, some day

**REFRAIN**

We shall live in peace  
We shall live in peace  
We shall live in peace, some day

**REFRAIN**

We are not afraid  
We are not afraid  
We are not afraid, TODAY

**REFRAIN**

The whole wide world around  
The whole wide world around  
The whole wide world around some day

**REFRAIN**

## 2026 MLK Jr. Award

Recipient: The Honorable Melanie Levesque  
Presented by: Olivia Zink (Open Democracy)



Melanie Ann Levesque was born in the [Boston](#) neighborhood of [Roxbury](#). She earned an [A.A.](#) from New Hampshire Vocational-Technical College, a [B.S.](#) from [Daniel Webster College](#), and an [M.B.A.](#) from [Southern New Hampshire University](#). Hon. Melanie Levesque holds the historic distinction of being the first African American State Senator in New Hampshire. She represented District 12, which spans from Nashua to Rindge, during her tenure from 2018 to 2020. During her time in the State Senate, Melanie Levesque served as the Chair of the Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee. She also contributed her expertise as a member of the Senate Judiciary and Transportation Committees. Her legislative career began in the New Hampshire House of Representatives, where she served from 2006 to 2010 and again from 2012 to 2014. While in the House, she was appointed to the Election Law Committee as well as the Science, Technology, and Energy Committee. A tireless advocate for her community, Melanie Levesque has championed essential causes including voting rights, the availability of quality public education for every child, affordable and accessible healthcare, environmental sustainability with an emphasis on renewable energy, public safety, and retirement security. Notably, she sponsored and successfully passed legislation to establish the Statewide Emergency Notification System for New Hampshire.

Beyond her legislative work, Melanie Levesque has played significant roles within the New Hampshire Democratic Party, serving as Director of Outreach from 2021 to 2022. She is currently the Chair for the Brookline Democrats, Chair of the NHDP African American Caucus, and served as NAACP Freedom Fund Dinner Co-Chair in 2024 and 2025. Her dedication to civic engagement is further demonstrated by her previous involvement with NH Civics, the NH Women's Foundation, the New Hampshire Endowment for Health Advisory Committee, and her service as a Trustee for the Town of Brookline.

Melanie is the President of TCS of America Enterprises, LLC, a telecommunications consulting firm, she and her sister Cindy Perkins own. Having grown up in Nashua, Melanie now resides in Brookline, New Hampshire, with her husband Scott.

The MLK Jr. Coalition is honored to present the 2026 MLK Jr. Award to the Honorable Melanie Levesque who epitomizes the spirit of Dr. King's work.

## **2026 Vanessa Washington-Johnson Bloeman Award**

Recipient: Representative Alice Wade

Presented by: Sebastian Fuentes, 2022 MLK Jr. Award



This award is given to recognize and encourage emerging leaders in movements in social justice. Representative Alice Wade is an aerospace engineer who moved to Dover shortly after graduating from the University of New Hampshire with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. Alice is the Founder of the Sally Ride Fellowship, a program that helps connect underrepresented students with internships in the aerospace industry. She was elected to the NH House of Representatives in 2024 and is currently serving Dover Ward 2, Strafford's 15<sup>th</sup> District. Her top priorities in office are to create more affordable housing, make childcare and healthcare more accessible, and work to address the climate crisis. Alice has been involved as the Vice Chair of the Dover Committee for Racial Equity and Inclusion since 2023. She continues to serve on the Strafford County Democrats Executive Committee (2024 to present).

As an openly transgender person, Alice has already faced down discrimination at the State House with courage and dignity. She is a model of grace, fortitude and honesty. She is indeed a person to watch, support and champion in the years to come.

Our congratulations to Representative Alice Wade on this honor in the name of another pioneer and activist.

**Given in memory of Vanessa Washington-Johnson Bloeman, for many years the organizer and administrator of the MLK Jr. Coalition. Gone too soon, she is missed by all of us.**

## Martin Luther King, Jr. Coalition Organization Members

American Friends Service Committee – NH  
City Year NH  
BAPOC (Business Alliance for People of Color)  
Big Brothers/Big Sisters  
Granite State Organizing Project/Y.O.U.  
Manchester Education Association (MEA) \*  
Greater Manchester NAACP \*  
National Education Association-NH (NEA – NH) \*  
NH Center for Justice & Equity\*  
NH Council of Churches  
American Civil Liberties Union-NH  
New Hampshire Council of Churches \*  
NH Youth Movement  
Open Democracy \*  
SEIU Local 1984  
St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Goffstown \*  
Temple Adath Yeshurun \*  
United Methodist Foundation of New England  
(Justice in Our Time Fund) \*  
Welcoming NH  
603 Equality

\*Financial Sponsors

## Our Appreciation and Gratitude

The Manchester School District  
Manchester Memorial High School  
Manchester Memorial High School Jazz Band  
Chalifour's Flowers-Manchester  
The Puritan  
Don Quijote Restaurant  
Becky Field  
Rick Menard (BCNH)  
UNH-M ASL Program  
NH Peacekeepers

## Martin Luther King, Jr. Coalition- NH Organizing Committee

Sebastian Fuentes, David Holt, Olivia Zink, Jason Wells, Lisa Beaudoin, Maxine Mosley, Beth Davidson, James McKim, Grace Kindeke, Jini Rae Sparkman, Melissa Goerbig, Brian Bernard, Sayles Kasten, Anthony Poore, Linds Jakows, Lois Numbi, Lionel Loveless, Zandra Rice Hawkins