

# NEWS-RECORD

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Above left, Columbia High School senior Theresa Desir performs Nina Simone's 'To Be Young, Gifted and Black,' accompanied by the Bufford School



Photos by Kaanita Iyer

of Music Faculty Band. Above right, community leaders join hands to sing 'We Shall Overcome,' concluding the event.

## Two towns unite to remember Dr. King

*Community members from Maplewood and South Orange honor King's legacy at annual CCR event*

By Kaanita Iyer  
Staff Writer

The South Orange-Maplewood Community Coalition on Race united the two towns to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr.'s message of love, equality and acceptance Jan. 16, with its 16th annual MLK Observation and Volunteer Fair.

The event, previously held at religious institutions, was hosted by Columbia High School for the first time in order to accommodate the growing number of attendees. The larger space also accommodated those

attending the Volunteer Fair, held after the observance to demonstrate the value of service advocated by King. The fair, held in the CHS Cafeteria, included organizations such as the Domestic Violence Response Team, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, and the Court Appointed Special Advocates.

Residents from the two towns and beyond, of different races, skin colors, religions, genders and ages, filled the CHS Auditorium for the observance, exemplifying the integration King dreamed of decades ago.

The program commenced with an intro-

duction from Barbara Velasquez, a member of the CCR's MLK Committee, who said, "Martin Luther King's words and legacy has been an inspiration to all of us. But even more so at this time as we enter into President Obama's last week as our president."

She urged the audience to "please think of ways that (they) can be a starter to promote social justice ... to stand up for those groups that are going to be most impacted by this new administration."

Like Velasquez, other speakers mentioned the election of Donald Trump and

stressed the timeliness and significance of conducting such dialog.

CCR Executive Director Nancy Gagnier said, "We're facing the eve of the 45th president's inauguration and many of us feel ourselves to be on shifting ground, looking for foothold. But let me tell you, all of you people here today, we need activists now."

LaShawn Warren, the event's featured speaker, is a public interest attorney with nearly two decades of service and an activist in her own right. Warren is the newly

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# 'This is the time for courage,' Warren tells SOMA crowd

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appointed vice president of Faith and Progressive Policy at the Center for American Progress, took time out from preparing to relocate to Washington, D.C., to share a few words and celebrate King's legacy, which she said has "particular meaning and resonance" for her, as she comes from Savannah, Ga.

"At the age of 39, (King) gave the ultimate sacrifice — his life — even when he knew that he would never experience the freedoms he fought so hard for," Warren said. "Today we should pause to reflect on what we have done with these freedoms. Have we become self-centered and complacent? Do we take positions on issues that only affect us personally? I submit that any injustice, anywhere, to anyone, concerns all of us because we all are a part of the same human family."

Demonstrating Warren's message of fighting social justices with a collaborative effort, the CCR organized a communal affirmation, in which leaders of the community recited excerpts from King's "Letter From Birmingham Jail" and the audience replied with, "We commit ourselves to this truth."

The audience concluded this portion of the event by pledging to continue King's efforts, saying: "Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deepfog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty."

Community leaders at the event included South Orange Police Chief Kyle Kroll,

Maplewood Police Chief Robert Cimino, the Rev. Terry Richardson, Kadam Peter Kurczynski, North Jersey Pride Executive Director C.J. Prince, CHS teacher T.J. Whitaker, CHS student Kambiz Roghanchi, Rabbi Jesse Olitzky of Congregation Beth El, Maplewood Mayor Victor DeLuca and South Orange Village President Sheena Collum.

In his reading from King's letter, Olitzky changed the word "man" to "people" in the excerpt from the Declaration of Independence that reads "we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal," thus applying the message to all genders and promoting the inclusivity and the advancements in society since King's death.

While Warren described the upcoming change in administration, whose values seem "a complete contradiction of everything Dr. King stood for," she encouraged attendees to take inspiration from King's legacy and carry it forward.

"This is not the time to run nor is it the time to despair," Warren said. "This is the time for courage. We must have the courage and conviction to serve as the moral voice whenever and wherever we see injustice."

In addition to the speakers at the event, there were powerful performances by the Buford School of Music Faculty Band, which played Nina Simone's "I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free"; CHS senior Theresa Desir, who sang Simone's "To Be Young, Gifted and Black"; and the Children's Chorus, which sang "Freedom is a Constant Struggle."

The gathering concluded with everyone joining hands to sing "We Shall Overcome," led by officials, clergy and CCR trustees.



Photos by Keanita Iyer

Clockwise from top: The Domestic Violence Response Team sets up a booth at the Volunteer Fair.

- CCR Program Director Audrey Rowe discusses King's influence.
- CCR Executive Director Nancy Gagnier discusses the current need for activism.
- Coalition Chairman Robert Marchman delivers closing remarks.



## Essex County outlines plans for 10th annual deer-management program

Essex County recently outlined plans for the 2017 deer-management program in South Mountain Reservation and Hilltop Reservation. This is the 10th year of the program, which is geared toward revitalizing the forest ecology by reducing the number of deer. The program will not be held in Eagle Rock Reservation this year.

"Controlling the population by removing deer from South Mountain and Hilltop has proven to be very successful in helping to preserve the forest habitat and maintain our reservations as viable resources for recreation and open space. Each year, we have updated our program to address current conditions, reducing the number of days and transitioning into a 'maintenance mode' to maintain the population at a manageable level," Essex County Executive Joseph D'Amico said in a news release. "This is not one fast

maximize safety. For the first time, makeup days have been scheduled in case the program is canceled because of inclement weather.

Deer were culled in South Mountain Reservation on Tuesday, Jan. 17, and will be culled again today, Jan. 19; makeup days are Jan. 24 and 26. South Mountain Reservation is located in Maplewood, Millburn and West Orange. Deers will be culled in Hilltop Reservation on Jan. 31 and Feb. 2, 7 and 9, with makeup days being Feb. 14 and 16. Hilltop Reservation is located in Cedar Grove, North Caldwell and Verona.

Since 2008, a total of 2,013 deer — 1,254 deer and 759 unborn deer — were removed utilizing the services of experienced and qualified marksmen who volunteer their time. They are licensed by the state of New Jersey and have

top Reservation and all parking areas and walking paths inside the two reservations will be closed to the public on the days the program is held in that specific reservation. Turtle Back Zoo, Codely Anna, the Park-N-Ride facility and McLoone's Boathouse in West Orange and all county roads through the reservations will remain open. The Essex County Sheriff's Office will coordinate safety patrols with local police departments.

All deer removed from the reservations are inspected and information about its age, reproductive status, gender and weight, as well as the number of shots fired, is collected. They are transported by the county to a N.J. Department of Health-approved butcher for processing. Venison is donated to the Community FoodBank of New Jersey in Hillside which distributes the meat to the needy and