



SERVE OHIO
Ohio Commission on Service and Volunteerism

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On MLK Day, Ohioans Use ServeOhio Grants to Advance Economic Opportunities

Grants support seven local community service projects and nearly 1000 volunteers throughout Ohio

Columbus, OH. –ServeOhio, the Governor-appointed commission on service and volunteerism, announces mini-grant awards to support seven local Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service projects on January 21, 2013. The grants, made possible through their Stewards of Service corporate partners Honda of America MFG., Inc. and AEP Ohio, honor Dr. King's legacy by increasing economic opportunities through service and volunteer activities. Service projects will take place in Cleveland, Columbus, Lebanon, McArthur, Mansfield, Akron and Toledo.

Each project commits to bringing volunteers together to create or improve community assets or infrastructure, and supports local community engagement that advances economic opportunity. The various projects include collaborative partnerships among businesses and nonprofits. Finally, they all include an education component to create long-term, sustainable change on issues and people.

"As the need for service continues to grow, we honor Dr. King by supporting local organizations that give back and make a real impact on our communities," said William Hall, ServeOhio Executive Director. "Ohio volunteers will use the power of service to strengthen economic security and make a difference in our local communities."

ServeOhio awards these grants with support from their 2012-2013 Stewards of Service corporate partners Honda of America MFG., Inc. and AEP Ohio. Each grant totals between \$800 and \$1,000.

The 2013 MLK Day mini-grant recipients:

City Year Cleveland, Cleveland – City Year will organize 450 volunteer youth, parents and local citizens at five schools and community organizations for the "MLK Day On of Service." According to the Ohio Department of Education Report Card, 100 percent of families living in these Cleveland communities are economically disadvantaged or eligible for free/reduced lunch. On January 21st, volunteers will organize and participate in MLK poem/essay contests, repaint classrooms, perform basic maintenance, beautify central meeting areas and make 200 hygiene and support kits for military veterans. Collaborators include: the grassroots service initiative Do Something Day, HandsOn Northeast Ohio and WZAK FM Radio.

HandsOn Central Ohio, Columbus– The goal of HandsOn Central Ohio's (HOCO) MLK Day 2013 service project is to mobilize youth and teach them how to lead others in service projects to address local community needs. They will partner with The King Arts Complex for their annual MLK Day Open House which traditionally draws 5,000 youth and families. HOCO will provide a leadership training on tools needed to lead service projects. Other projects include youth decorating a bus seat to symbolize Rosa Parks' courage, creating flower bouquets for

patients at Nationwide Children's Hospital, assembling fleece blankets for residents of the YWCA Family Center, and creating cards of thanks to American troops serving overseas.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Coalition of Lebanon, Ohio, Inc., Lebanon – The mission of the coalition is to honor Dr. King's vision of justice by building an inclusive network of people and organizations that work toward empowerment for all people. Needs assessment data from the *Family and Children First Warren County Community Report 2011* indicate that a growing number of community members face significant challenges in multiple life areas. 125 volunteers will provide direct service by hosting a community meal, painting the veteran's hall at the American Legion Post, setting up local nonprofit resource tables at the host site space, organizing a collection drive and stuffing envelopes for the Child Advocacy Center. The coalition will organize an additional 125 volunteers to continue the service throughout next year.

Sojourners Care Network, McArthur – Vinton County is the least diverse county in Ohio, where 97.6 percent of the population is Caucasian. Sojourners Care Network spearheads the only MLK Day Celebration and community service project in the county. On January 21st, 20 teachers, 50 Sojourners staff and 40 community volunteers will provide services to the 828 elementary school children. They will assemble MLK skits, highlight tolerance, provide Civil Rights history, and use the 'MLK Day Express' – a one-engine, two-car train – to share Dr. King's message and engage the students.

SPARC, Mansfield – The Big Red Bookshelf will put books into the homes of young, low-income children ages 0-7 and provide free literacy screenings. The first book drive will kick off on January 21st at the MLK Memorial, but several locations will host ongoing book shelves where children can continually take books home to keep. The grants also support the purchase of 'Getting Ready to Read Assessments,' which are screening tools and information tool kits for parents.

The University of Akron, Department of Student Life, Civic Engagement Programs, Akron – 50 University of Akron students will volunteer with Nazereth Housing to revitalize neighborhoods across Akron city. Nazereth Housing values the same vision as MLK – coming together to regenerate communities. Volunteers will construct and rebuild several low-income properties that require interior and exterior construction/demolition work, along with landscaping.

University Church, Toledo – According to the Ohio Department of Education Report Card, Reynolds Elementary School designation is 'academic watch.' This MLK Day project tackles the schools' goal to increase parent involvement in the education of their children. Volunteers from the school, University Church and A Renewed Mind will create the "Parent Zone" at the school. They will develop, paint and decorate a community area for parents to minimize barriers between home and school. Inside, the Resource Board will include information for updated community services, emergency assistance, job training programs, health services and the history of Dr. King's legacy.

According to the [Volunteering and Civic Life in America report](#) released this month, Ohioans contributed \$5.7 billion of service contributed through 255.3 million hours of service in 2011. Find out more about volunteer engagement in Ohio at www.serveohio.org.

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ServeOhio is Ohio's Governor-appointed Commission on Service and Volunteerism. Their mission is to strengthen Ohio communities through service and volunteerism by supporting and funding programs and initiatives that engage thousands of Ohioans of all ages. Interested participants may learn more about ServeOhio at www.serveohio.org or visit them on Facebook and Twitter.