



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
428 60th Street, West New York, New Jersey 07093

TOGETHER WE CAN
THE TOWN OF WEST NEW YORK HONORS MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

“We must live together as brothers or perish together as fools.”
— Martin Luther King Jr.

As your mayor, as a military man, a physician, and as a United States citizen, I find the above quote to be particularly relevant to all of us in this time of economic hardship, political contention, and societal unrest.

Over the past year, we as a community and as a nation have faced a particularly contentious election following a particularly contentious political climate. Politicians, political and religious groups, and citizens have become even more strongly divided on matters of race, gender, and the current financial crisis.

We have experienced the devastation of seemingly random shootings in public places, perhaps most appallingly in our schools. And of course, we have lived through the wreckage of Hurricane Sandy, and many of us are still trying to put together what the storm ripped apart.

I strongly believe that all of these things, while they have the potential to divide us, also have the potential to unite us in fundamental ways. These hardships make it even more crucial that we come together, help each other, so that we can pull through.

I believe Mr. King would have been proud to see how our residents came through for each other after the hurricane, regardless of race, gender, or economic status.

Martin Luther King Jr. was one of the United States' most famous civil rights activists and led a nationwide movement to end racial segregation and bring us together as a country in the 1960s. Mr. King was an advocate of non-violent protest during a time of racial upheaval and discrimination in U.S. history, and was the youngest man to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

After Mr. King's assassination in 1968, a bill was introduced to honor his achievements by designating his birthday a federal holiday. The bill finally became law in 1983, thanks in large part to musician Stevie Wonder's single "Happy Birthday" (written for Mr. King), which inspired six million U.S. citizens' signatures in support. Martin Luther King Day was first observed in 1986, although it was not observed in all states until the year 2000. This year the day falls on Monday, January 21.

I can think of no better role model for us as families, as a town, as a nation. Let us honor the man by following his example of leading by example. United, we have a far better chance of overcoming any hardship – current or future – than if we chose to face it alone.

God bless,

Mayor Felix E. Roque, M.D.

Lead by Example