



CITY LIFE



ABOVE: Spoken Word, Inclusion & Diversity Nji is a writer, artist, and producer, and poet located in Cedar Rapids. Last year, she produced the spoken word and dance show Youth Rising in collaboration with Leslie Nolte.

By Lindy Rublaitus and Cecile Bendersa

Gathered in the Little Theater and Opstad Auditorium, students listened to speakers talk about their lives and how they related to Martin Luther King Jr., as Iowa City High prepares to celebrate MLK day on Monday, January 15th. Speakers joined together to give input on poetry and storytelling. Topics ranged from being an adult to parenting, all relating to the problems we face in modern society.

Akwi Nji, a writer, artist, producer, and poet located in Cedar Rapids, spoke during 1st period in storytelling fashion about her struggles of being a person of color surrounded by white people as a child.

"Everybody is creative and I think that there is a lot of power to be explored in the context of art," Nji said. "I think it's important that we share the personal stories that are within us and shape who we are. I think the only way to build a stronger more positive community is if we do more of that."

Nji invited students to come up to the stage to say what they stand for to promote sharing their stories. Responses ranged from family to fashion, displaying the diversity held within the walls of City.

Destinie Gibson '20 shared her poem about stereotypes, white supremacy, and the struggle against police brutality.

"I was inspired to go up there because she inspired me. She is a woman of color, and

women of color inspire me," Gibson said.

During 2nd period, Raquisha Harrington expanded on the idea of finding your own path and not giving up on yourself. Harrington, at the age of 15, was a teen parent but persisted through the stereotypes of young mothers and people of color. She repeated the phrase "I want to be the author of my own story" to show her desire to step away from what was bringing her down, and not fitting the failing figure of young parents all while showing pictures of her happy family.

"When you are faced with challenges, or when people tell you that you can't accomplish things, or you want to reach certain goals and you're faced with a lot of challenges, you should never give up," Harrington said. "Continue to be the first version of yourself and not the second version of somebody else."

Harrington is also part of an MLK Day celebration on Saturday, January 13th from noon to 6:00 pm at the Robert A. Lee Recreation center for students in grades 5-12. Students will listen to speakers, participate in group activities, and bond over food.

In Opstad, hundreds of students filed in to listen to City's Student Advisory Director, Fred Newell. Growing up without a supportive father in his life, he shared his goals on making City more of a community and creating safe places to turn to in the community. Focusing on how "failure is not final unless you quit," he shared outlets in Iowa City for people in need of support.

"There were many times [Martin Luther King Jr.] ran into obstacles but, the reason why he became such a big influence in our community is because he didn't allow those failures to stop him. He used it as fuel to help us to get to where we are now," Newell said.



BACK HISTORY GAME SHOW CHAMPIONS

LEFT OT RIGHT: Makayda Johnson, Khate Bacho, Coach Fred Newell, Samba Traore, Carlos Nunez-Aguillon, Rodeen Shaban, Des Moines Sponsor, Cecile Bendera, Angel Sila, Everline Bwayo, Mariam Keita, Maisha Sila, Quiari Edwards



Fred Newell



Raquisha Harrington

MLK Day Featured Speakers

By Mariam Keita and Cecile Bendera

In celebration of the life and accomplishments of the influential Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., City High had a slew of guest speakers every period (besides fourth) on Friday, January 11th in homage.

Akwi Nji

Spoken Word, Inclusion & Diversity

Nji is a writer, artist, and producer, and poet located in Cedar Rapids. Last year, she produced the spoken word and dance show Youth Rising in collaboration with Leslie Nolte.

Raquisha Harrington & Sam Taylor

Privilege, Responsibility, and Classroom Life and Make Your Own Path

Taylor is an educator at West Branch private school Scattergood Friends School and Farm. He will be speaking on responsibilities held by educators and students alike.

Fred Newell

Dreams Are Possible

Newell is the Student Advisory Director at City High School as well as being the founder of the Dream Center. Newell also coaches several youth basketball teams in the Iowa City Area.

Ryan Mosser

Academic Opportunities for Minority Students Seeking College

Mosser is an employee for Equal Opportunity Schools, a company that is currently working with City High

to improve minority representation in accelerated courses. He has also spent time living in Chile.

City High Alumni Panel

Minority Student College Success Stories

These former City High students will be returning to the hallways that they once walked to share stories about how life turned out after graduation.

Henri Harper

"Focus on Your Future"

Henri Harper is Iowa City police community outreach officer who used to be an educator at City High school. Harper is one of the founders of a program called FasTrac. FasTrac's aim is to help student put their futures in to focus and exceed in education.

CITY NEWS



ICCSA Celebrates MLK Day with Color of Unity March

By Badra Kalil

Nearly 100 people gathered for the first annual Unity March, sponsored by the City of Iowa City. The march began at Faith Academy, a ministry of a local church, where people designed posters and drank hot chocolate before marching to Grant Wood Elementary in honor of MLK Jr. Day. Before the march began, participants formed a "circle of unity" to show and celebrate the diversity of the people that came together. People then proceeded to march through snow and attempt to stay warm in the wind-chill of -14°.

While everyone seemed to have their own reasons for marching, a lot of them centered on one common theme: fighting against hate, and pushing towards acceptance.

"I had students who were talking about [the march] at school, so I wanted to show support," said Christine Lewers, a teacher at City High. "I wanted to be in solidarity with teachers and community leaders, and point out the importance of fighting against hate."

For some, the march only became more important after flyers advertising a white supremacist group were recently distributed around the area. Preschool teacher Tricia Windschitl was one of these people.

"I wanted to support our community, especially against recent hate flyers in the community," Windschitl said.

After the march, there were service opportunities and activities at Grant Wood Elementary, as well as some speakers. These speakers stressed the importance of making a difference first on the local level, then expanding to state and federal levels. They also mentioned how MLK Jr. Day was not a "day off," but rather a day for community service. The speakers and organizers were very proud to see so many people participating in the march, even in the freezing cold. Iowa City is hoping to get an even bigger crowd next year.

C A U T I O N !

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