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Press Release

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Supervisor Glover's statement on Martin Luther King Day

This weekend (Jan. 15-17, 2011), East County communities have organized celebrations to honor one of America's modern heroes, the Rev. Martin Luther King.

Years after the death of Dr. King, we are still drawing from his legacy. We are still learning, we still seek wisdom, we are still seeking guidance, and we are still drawing inspiration from the words of Martin Luther King Jr.

We know we have made some great advances in civil rights, in education and in race relations, but we also know that the dream he spoke of hasn't been attained yet. We know we have a ways to go.

We have only to look at the events in Tucson to see evidence of the hatred that permeates our society.

We only have to know that almost a third of our kids don't graduate from high school to know that something is inherently wrong.

We only have to read about our young people dying and dealing drugs in the streets to know that something is amiss.

We only have to read the postings on the Internet to know that the computer screen has replaced the hood that used to hide the identity of bigots.

We have a problem.

"The trouble isn't so much that our scientific genius lags behind, but our moral genius lags behind," said King. "The great problem facing modern man is that, that the means by which we live have outdistance the spiritual ends for which we live. So we find ourselves caught in a messed-up world. ... And that is the basis of our problem."

We still remember and speak of his dream because it is our dream. It is America's dream.

Dr. King is no longer with us, but we are still here. It is up to us to go beyond his dream - - our dream -- and continue our journey to the mountain top.

If you really want to honor the man, if you really want to honor his legacy, memories are not enough.

It is up to us --- all of us – to work to carry out the dream ... to turn that dream into reality.

We can do that by paying attention in the classroom. Listen to your teachers. Not only your classroom teachers but the teachers of life, your pastors, your mentors, your role models or your parents.

We can do that by being respectful to each other, even if we disagree with each other.

We can do that by speaking out when we see wrong. In this era when so much hate and ignorance is repeated a thousand times over in the Internet and on the radio, for so many people lies become truth, truth becomes muddled.

That means you have to make an effort to know what's going on in the world and in your community so you can discern what's truthful and what is meant to mislead and confuse.

That means you have to be involved in making your community better ... make your school better, make your neighborhood better. And ultimately, that means you have to make time for your family. And there are many types of families. You may be a single parent, or increasingly there are blended families.

For you parents, we can do that by helping the teacher teach your children. Don't make excuses for your kids. Read to them, help them with their homework, talk to them, know who their friends are, know where they are at. You know, this new technology is a wonderful thing. With a GPS device in most cell phones, parents can keep track of their children's whereabouts.

Most of all, parents, love your children.

We can do that by reaching out to those in need. Not all of us are rich but we can live the values taught to us in the Good Book: To feed the hungry, clothe the naked and shelter the homeless.

I end with the words of the man whom we honor today. Dr. King said:

“One of the great liabilities of history is that all too many people fail to remain awake through great periods of social change. Every society has its protectors of status quo and its fraternities of the indifferent who are notorious for sleeping through revolutions. Today, our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change.”

Several community events remembering King's legacy are planned. You might want to attend one of them. They are:

- Pittsburg
Martin Luther King Celebration: "Holding Hands, Not Guns"
Jan. 17: 11:15 a.m. Rally, Pittsburg City Hall followed by a march to Marina Vista Elementary, 50 East 8th St., 12 noon program.
- Antioch
3rd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. birthday celebration
Jan. 17, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Deer Valley High School, 4700 Lone Tree Way
- Martinez
33rd Annual MLK Commemoration: "Martin Luther King in the 21st Century"
Jan. 18, 11 a.m. to noon, 651 Pine Street. Board of Supervisors chambers