

CITY OF IRVING 2022 MLK ESSAY CONTEST WINNER

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“Out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope . . . let freedom ring from every mountain top.” These words from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. inspire me. If you are climbing a mountain, you cannot give up, or you will fall. You need hope and determination to keep climbing to reach the mountain top. We see the virtue of perseverance in Dr. King’s life. He had hope and never gave up his mission of fighting for justice and freedom for all people. If it wasn’t for Dr. King, today I wouldn’t be living in my neighborhood, have some of my friends, or be able to play sports or go to school with people who look different from me. During Dr. King’s time, people of color suffered from segregation. They were treated differently. People of color were separated in public places. They could not eat at the same table, play at the same park, or even swim in the same swimming pool. Dr. King organized many marches and demonstrations, and people from all walks of life came together to fight against these injustices. Even though Dr. King was criticized and experienced opposition in his work to unite people, he never gave up. I believe that victory can be born from disappointment. One of my favorite portions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I Have A Dream” speech is the following: I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain would be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight. With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. Bit by bit we have been climbing the mountain of despair, and bit by bit we have been solving these problems. But today there is still work to be done to eradicate division and racism. We need to strengthen unity and brotherhood in our nation and in our world to continue this important work, and we need hope. Some of the ways I have joined Dr. King’s mission to follow his dream is by standing up for my friends including my friends of color. In school, when I have seen my friends experience unkind words or actions, I have spoken up. I have talked to my teachers and school administrators. We can be upstanders and not bystanders when we see injustice happen around us. We should not be silent. Silence adds to despair. All our voices are important and should be heard for freedom to ring from every mountaintop. All people, young and old, and from different backgrounds need to stand up for each other and work together to build unity. Like Dr. King encouraged us, let us all have the faith to one day help his dream come true. Let hope and freedom rise from the mountain top!