Unity in our country has been challenged by repeated acts of confrontation and violence. Lives have been lost; angry rhetoric has turned into aggressive action. Minor differences, whether in schools, communities, or even in relationships can escalate into law-involved, violent, and even fatal consequences. In words and deeds all too often, it seems we forget how to love and respect one another.

In his essay “Nonviolence and Racial Justice” published February 6, 1957, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. laid out a path forward for the country on the basis of nonviolence. At the center of nonviolence stands the principle of love. In struggling for human dignity, the oppressed people of the world must not allow themselves to become bitter or indulge in hate campaigns. To retaliate with hate and bitterness would do nothing but intensify the hate in the world.

To learn more about the King Philosophy of Non-Violence, visit http://www.thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy#sub2

From September 25, 2017, through August 28, 2018, the National Alliance of Faith and Justice (NAFJ) aims to engage at least 60 schools and institutions in recognizing a continuum of historic anniversaries through Nonviolence to No Violence. The campaign will encourage participants to take a stand to keep a seat in school, learn more about and adopt Dr. King’s philosophy of nonviolence, and ignite a movement to engage in 50-, 55-, or 60-day commemorative service commitments of no violence.
MEET OUR 2018 AMBASSADOR

Edith Lee-Payne

IT’S COMING!!!

August 28, 2018 will mark the 55th Anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

Many photos from the historic event have taken on iconic status. One of them is a photo of a young black girl attending the march. Maybe you have seen this picture and wondered, “Who is she? Where is she now?”

This image has been used in documentaries, textbooks, museum exhibits, and countless events. The girl in that picture is Edith Lee-Payne from Detroit, Michigan. The photo was taken August 28, 1963, her 12th birthday.

When Lee-Payne heard Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. speak about his dream for America at the event, she indeed felt that her life embodied some of what he envisioned. As an adult, Ms. Lee-Payne knows personally the toll violence takes.

We now have the opportunity to hear her thoughts. She is still advocating for change, and she is eager to share her experience about that day and since with you. Her words encourage students to take a stand to keep their seat in school and fulfill Dr. King’s dream of non-violence with no violence.

For an introduction to her story, view: https://youtu.be/kYFcVepwXmU

To invite her to speak at your school in conjunction with your campaign, please contact us at (202) 661-3521, or by email at communications@nafj.org.

LEARN AND SERVE

What do we know about violence?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, youth violence can take different forms. Examples, among many, may include fights, bullying, threats with weapons, and gang-related violence. Youth’s experiences, knowledge, and skills can influence their likelihood of becoming involved in violence.

Strengthening young people’s abilities to effectively solve difficulties that arise and their opportunities to participate in prosocial activities can significantly reduce the risk for violence. Research shows that prevention efforts by teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and even students – can reduce violence and improve the overall school environment. Positive relationships between students and their prosocial peers, teachers, and families can be critical assets in promoting youth’s well-being and preventing school violence. Through Non-Violence to No-Violence Campaign, we are proposing school-wide idea.

What can we learn about non-violence?

Sixty years earlier on February 6, in 2017, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. laid out a path forward for the country on the basis of nonviolence in his published essay, “Nonviolence and Racial Justice.”

Later on September 25, 2017, we celebrated the 60th anniversary since the entry and integration of nine students at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas.

With these key anniversaries in mind, the National Alliance of Faith and Justice (NAFJ) is encouraging students to learn about, reflect, and act beginning February 6, 2018, by committing to 60 days of NO VIOLENCE in your school.

Dr. King was shot while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee and died on April 4, 1968. Between January 15, the birthdate (MLK Day of Service), and April 4, 2018, the 50th Anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. -

What can you do? Visit the Corporation for National and Community Service (www.mlk.gov) and the Martin Luther King Jr Center for Nonviolent Social Change (www.mlk50forward) to learn more about Dr. King and service. If not 60, NAFJ encourages your school to begin a school-wide 50-day commitment of NO VIOLENCE.

The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom has been one of the largest gatherings for civil rights of all time. An estimated 250,000 people came from near and far to the National Mall. Much can be learned. Visit this site to learn more about the march: http://www.nationalmall.org/our-living-history

What can you do? Beginning February 6, 2018, if not 50 or 60, consider planning and conducting a 55-day campaign of NO VIOLENCE to honor this anniversary.

Let’s learn from non-violence and commit to no violence.

Dr. King once said, “I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.”
The National Alliance of Faith and Justice (NAFJ) is a member of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, a global network of historic sites, museums and memory initiatives connecting past struggles to today’s movements for human rights and social justice.

In the fall of 1957, Little Rock, Arkansas became the symbol of state resistance to school desegregation. The controversy in Little Rock was the first fundamental test of the United States resolve to enforce African-American civil rights in the face of massive southern defiance during the period following the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka decisions. It was one in which African Americans took responsibility for exercising and protecting their rights and those of others. On September 25, 1957, under federal troop escort, the Little Rock Nine (nine African American students, entered Central High School to take a stand to keep a seat for their first full day of classes. The Central High Little Rock National Historic Site (www.nps.gov/chsc) now stands as a symbol of the struggle.

The leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is deeply cherished in the drive for the realization of the freedoms and liberties laid down in the foundation of the United States of America. The delivery of his message of love and tolerance through the powerful gift of speech and his eloquent writings continue to inspire those who yearn for a gentler, kinder world. His inspiration broke the boundaries of intolerance and even national borders. He became a symbol, recognized worldwide of the quest for civil rights of the citizens of the world.

There are two units in the National Park system that memorialize the legacy of Dr. King. The Martin Luther King National Historic Site is in Atlanta, Georgia, and is the final resting place for Dr. Martin and Mrs. Coretta Scott King, (www.nps.gov/malu) In Washington, DC, on the National Mall stands the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, (www.nps.gov/mlkm).

The National Mall, located in the heart of the nation’s capital, makes it an attractive site for protests and rallies of all types. One notable example was the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom at which Dr. King delivered his speech, “I Have A Dream.”

The National Alliance of Faith and Justice (NAFJ) is pleased to work in cooperation with the National Park Service (NPS) through the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial and the Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Sites (www.nps.gov/ulsg) in St. Louis, Missouri, and the Office of Interpretation, Education, and Volunteers to offer the Let Me Read You Your Rights Lesson Plan and Activities Booklet, an extension of our PEN OR PENCIL™ Initiative.

PEN OR PENCIL™ (POP) is a unique curriculum created by NAFJ. It consists of an extensive menu of evidence-informed group and team activities. Each activity is aligned with national standards to include those endorsed by the National Council for the Social Studies.

America has a long history of efforts in which citizens of all ages and genders, particularly youth, have taken a stand to keep or gain access to a seat, respect, and for equal rights. They have braved the courts, the Constitution, conscious or unconscious bias and brutality, some without realizing the impact their actions might have to change millions of lives and shape advances.

Through this curriculum, students can learn more and appreciate the National Park system for its interpretation of historic parallels and understand rights and characteristics linked with productive and informed citizenship.

Available on-line January 1, 2018 by visiting www.penorpencilmovement.org
Among many informative links, visit our national partner, Central High National Historic Site in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Our national parks tell the American story. Encompassing the remarkable diversity of America—our lands. Our culture, and our people—the parks reflect powerful forces of nature, the sobering chronicles of conflict, the irreplaceable spirit of innovation, and the enduring, hopeful vision of democracy. The national parks belong to every American—past, present, and future. While we know Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated on April 4, 1968, did you also know that Dr. Carter G. Woodson, founder and emphasis of Black History Month, died on April 3? Visit the Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site, and while in DC, did you know that on February 12, 2018, we will recognize the 200th birthday of Frederick Douglass and the 30th anniversary of the opening of the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site in DC? Learn more...

www.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights  www.nps.gov/frdo
www.nps.gov/chsc  www.nps.gov/cawo

The Martin Luther King Center for Nonviolent Social Change

Beginning January 15, the birthdate of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the national observance of MLK Day of Service, and continuing through April 4, 2018, the 50th anniversary of Dr. King’s death, the Martin Luther King Center for Nonviolent Social Change is encouraging individuals to cross the Racial, Cultural and Economic divides by participating in service projects or committing acts of kindness that have a positive impact on their community. This can be done individually or in conjunction with major entities or civic organizations. Find out more. Visit www.mlk50forward.org

National Ten Point Training Institute

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. devoted his life to equality, social justice, economic advancement, and opportunity for all. He challenged us to build a more perfect union and taught us that everyone has a role to play in making America what it ought to be. The National Ten Point Training Institute is committed to moving us closer to Dr. King’s vision of a beloved community. Using its proven strategy founded in Boston, Massachusetts by Dr. Eugene Rivers, the Institute provides a ten-point plan for clergy and lay people, law enforcement agencies, criminal justice officials and youth- and educational service providers to collaborate in reducing youth crime. Ten Point Coalitions, where located across the country, engage directly with residents on the streets, mobilize neighborhoods around the issue of fighting crime and violence, redirect the lives of at-risk youth who are most impacted by street violence, address the root causes of violence, and serve as advocates for peace.