

PROCLAMATION

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BIRTHDAY JANUARY 15, 2025

WHEREAS, the birthday of Civil Rights Leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who was born in Atlanta, Georgia on the 15th of January, 1929, was observed on the 20th of January, 2025, to honor him and his perilous lifetime journey to address the racial injustice of Black Americans; and the intersectionality of all social injustices not just in the United States but around the world; and

WHEREAS, Coretta Scott King was a Civil Rights icon within her own right. The remarkable partnership with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. resulted not only in four children who became dedicated to carrying forward their parents' work, but also in a life devoted to the highest values of human dignity in service to social change. We thank Coretta Scott King for her brilliantly fierce determination and for reminding us that we all have a role to play in the advancement of a more just world and we must always continue to push forward through unfathomable adversity to achieve justice; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as a spiritual leader not only of his own congregation but of millions throughout the world, pursued the philosophy of non-violence in his work, and in recognition of his teachings was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize as the youngest person at the time to receive this prestigious honor; and although life was cut short at the tender age of 39 may we all recognize that we all can achieve great things for the greater good regardless of age; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said "Everybody can be great because everybody can serve." During his lifetime he encouraged everyone to serve their neighbors and their communities and that "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, What are you doing for others?" The Village of Oak Park must be committed to asking what are we doing not just for our fellow Oak Parkers but for our communities at large, as Dr. King embodied the importance of building bridges and tearing down walls to cultivate a united society; and

WHEREAS, the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the age of 39 greatly impacted the national and global effort for racial equity and equality for Black Americans and all those impacted by social injustices; and served as a painful reminder that the pursuit of equality can come at many costs. But nevertheless, let us bravely forge ahead and lean on one another to never cease in our efforts to make our community a place for all and we mean **all**; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Oak Park strives to embody Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s vision of a beloved community as a group of people that could come together to solve any social

issue, division or struggle. One of the greatest strengths Oak Park has is the diversity of its people who come from many different walks of life. May we never lose sight for this as a unifier and never sow division; and

WHEREAS, the most poignant questions we here in the Village of Oak Park must ask ourselves: What will be the legacy of social and civil rights in Oak Park? What are we willing to sacrifice in order to continue to be a leader in social justice? What will the youth in Oak Park inherit and learn from our action or lack thereof? As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stated, “The ultimate measure of a man/person is not where he/they stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he/they stands at times of challenge and controversy.” May us all commit to banishing our comfort zones in the pursuit of racial and social justice and carry the spirit of the Kings along the way.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Vicki Scaman, President of the Village of Oak Park, and the Board of Trustees urge all community members to mark the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birth as a time of reflection on racial equity and to be of service to humanity. That although his legacy and the legacy of his wife Coretta Scott King are unparalleled, we all can and must commit to creating our own legacy of social justice here in Oak Park.

In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, the Village of Oak Park and Housing Forward invite all community members to join us for a Day of Service on Saturday, January 18th from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm to clean and revitalize our emergency overnight shelter at 38 North Austin Boulevard. If you would like to join us, please register on the Village of Oak Park’s website. This is a wonderful opportunity to give back and make a positive impact in the lives of those who rely on our shelter services. Together, we can honor Dr. King’s legacy of service and compassion by helping provide comfort and dignity to our neighbors and ensuring a clean and welcoming environment for those in need.

DATED this 14th day of January 2025.

Vicki Scaman
Village President

ATTEST

Christina M. Waters
Village Clerk