

# Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission

## 2023 Executive Summary

The mission of the Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission is a Division of the Arkansas Department of Education is to promote understanding and acceptance of nonviolence and human equality as a way of building community among all Arkansans and abroad to ensure that those involved acquire enhanced knowledge of the tenets and morals of other races and cultures that co-exist within the state's borders.

The Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission is a Division of the Arkansas Department of Education empowered to serve all Arkansans. It was created in 1993 by Act 1216 of the Arkansas General Assembly to promote the legacy and philosophy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. throughout the State of Arkansas and abroad. The Arkansas MLK, Jr. Commission works closely with the King Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta, Georgia, and other social service entities alike.

### **Purpose and Goals**

Promote racial harmony, understanding, community service, respect, and goodwill among all Arkansans and abroad.


Promote Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Six Principles Of Nonviolence

Promote awareness and appreciation of the Civil Rights movement and advocacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy, principles, and legacy throughout the State of Arkansas and abroad.

Promote awareness and appreciation of the Civil Rights movement and advocacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s principles and legacy

Develop, coordinate, and advise the Governor and General Assembly of appropriate ceremonies and activities throughout the state relating to the observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday and Holiday

Promote understanding and acceptance of nonviolence and human equality as a way of building community among all Arkansans.

 January 2023

### **All Day — [2023 Day of Service Day of Impact Statewide Service Challenge](#)**

The **Arkansas Martin Luther King Jr. Commission** challenged cities, communities, organizations, schools across the state to coordinate service projects or act of kindness on Jan 16, 2023, and send photos/video to KARK News 4. To spread kindness or an organized service project, you can also share it on your social media sites using the hashtag #MLK30!

### **All Day – [Free Bus Rides All Day](#)**

In partnership with Rock Region Metro, **the Arkansas Martin Luther King Jr. Commission** hosted free bus rides all day on January 16th, 2023, along Rock Region Bus Routes.

Celebrating 30 years of excellence and service, the Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission partnered with Rock Region Metro to host free bus rides all day on King Holiday, Monday, January 16, 2023! Dr. Martin Luther

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King, Jr. championed for access to transportation during the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955. His role would catapult him to prominence as a major force in the Civil Rights Movement. To honor this legacy, Arkansans were able to ride on the Rock Region Metro buses all day for free!

**King Holiday 2023**  
Day of Service Day of Impact  
**Free Bus Rides All Day**  
\*along Rock Region Bus Routes  
**Monday, January 16, 2023**

*"If transportation systems in American cities could be laid out so as to provide an opportunity for poor people to get to meaningful employment, then they could begin to move into the mainstream of American life."*

-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In partnership with the Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission

POWER 92.1 FM KOKU 103.1 FM PRAISE 106.1 FM

### The Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission hosted several events – one of them being a “Day of Impact Food Giveaway”

11 a.m. – 2 p.m. – [MLK Day Food Giveaway](#)

12,000 pounds of food given away for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

[Hundreds of families receive food for Martin Luther King Jr. Day | thv11.com](#)

[\(18\) Arkansas MLK commission gives out food to those in need - YouTube](#)

[Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebrated across central Arkansas | KLRT - FOX16.com](#)

The **Arkansas Martin Luther King Jr. Commission** hosted a massive food giveaway to commemorate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The event included a drive-through food give away, vendor showcase, and onsite community service projects. It was first come-first served scheduled from at 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 906 Broadway in Little Rock.

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The commission was joined by community leaders, local schools, organizations and a surprise helping hand from Arkansas' new first family Governor Sarah, First Gentleman Bryan, and children,



### 5:30 p.m. – 2023 Night of Unity

The **Arkansas Martin Luther King Jr. Commission** hosted a night of celebration that began at 5:30 p.m. at North Shore Riverwalk Park, Riverfront Drive in North Little Rock. A candlelight ceremony began with musical presentations from students of Sylvan Hills High School and Westwind School of Performing Arts in the park filled with a diverse audience including an international group from several other countries. The vigil was followed by Arkansas' 1st ever MLK Unity fireworks. This event was free and open to the public.

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### February 2023

Executive Director, DuShun Scarbrough joins other city, state, and community leaders, along with other community stakeholders in a round table discussion focused on reducing crime and violence in the Little Rock area lead by Governor Sarah Sanders.

[Sanders, leaders meet to focus on Little Rock crime \(arkansasonline.com\)](https://arkansasonline.com)

[Gov. Huckabee Sanders hosts roundtable with LR mayor and law enforcement | KATV](https://katv.com)



### March 2023 Dream Keepers Civil Rights Tour

**Arkansas MLK Commission Travels to Selma, Alabama to recognize the The Selma Bridge Crossing Jubilee of 1965.**

[Arkansas MLK Commission gathers in Selma, Alabama | KARK](https://kark.com)

Each year, the Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission participates with thousands from across the country in the “Bloody Sunday” Reenactment and Selma Bridge Crossing Jubilee. This annual event in Selma, Alabama, commemorates "Bloody Sunday," which occurred March 7, 1965, when a group of about 525 African American demonstrators gathered at Browns Chapel to demand the right to vote. Two weeks later, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. and 3,200 civil rights



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protesters marched the 49 miles from Selma to the state capital, Montgomery—an event that prompted Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act.

Every year on the first weekend in March, the Bridge Crossing Jubilee commemorates both the bloody confrontation at the Pettus Bridge and the March from Selma to Montgomery that followed.

Arkansas Martin Luther King Commission working to change the lives of youth

### April 2023

### The Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission had the honor of hosting the Keynote Session for the Arkansas Association of Student Councils State Conference

### Saturday, April 1, 2023 Harrison High School



Arkansas Association of Student Councils  
State Conference

Theme: Leading as one  
and focusing on  
diversity-but we are all  
leaders!

Keynote Speaker  
Executive Director  
The Arkansas  
Martin Luther King, Jr  
Commission

**DuShun Scarbrough**

Saturday, April 1, 2023 9:00 AM  
Harrison High School  
925 Goblin Drive  
Harrison, Arkansas 72601

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### **Friday, April 21, 2023**

The Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission proudly presented a session for state leaders during the Arkansas Fair Housing Commission Conference.

This session included an interactive introduction of the Commission and MLK trivia by Executive Director, DuShun Scarbrough, the importance of home ownership by Walter Washington, and A Moment in History with Historian, Tiffany Pettus.

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Arkansas Fair Housing Commission  
Department of the Inspector General  
PRESENTS

2023 Arkansas Fair Housing Commission Conference  
**WHAT IS F.A.I.R.?**  
*Fairness, Accessibility, Inclusivity, Responsibility*  
[www.https://ig.arkansas.gov/fair-housing/](https://ig.arkansas.gov/fair-housing/)

 Friday, April 21  
 8:00 AM-4:00 PM  
DELTA MARRIOTT HOTEL  
201 SOUTH SHACKLEFORD  
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

**DuShun Scarbrough, J.D.**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
OF THE ARKANSAS MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.  
COMMISSION WILL PRESENT AN ENGAGING  
SESSION ON INCLUSIVITY.



**REGISTRATION IS FREE AND REQUIRED**  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/arkansas-fair-housing-commission-annual-conference-tickets-588682313917?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>  
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT IVERSON JACKSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
(501) 682-3247 (FAIR)

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 **May 2023**



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### May 3, 2023 - The Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission Celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

The event was free and open to the public and included a band showcase, educational and artistic presentations, tributes to fatherhood, and collections of items for displaced victims affected by the most recent tornado. The band showcase included our partners in education that paid tribute to fifty years of hip-hop music.

Media personalities from all media outlets presented on the program. Craig O'Neill, legendary broadcaster and news anchor at THV11, delivered the keynote address and shared his experience as a teenager witnessing the iconic moment in Arkansas and American History when Governor Winthrop Rockefeller held the first vigil on the State Capitol steps honoring the memory of Dr. King following his passing.

Ashlei King, Victory Over Violence KARK/FOX 16; Ryan Houston, KATV morning anchor; and Broadway Joe Booker, Power 92 and the Broadway Morning Show, assisted the Commission in promoting nonviolence, led the group in a Pledge of Nonviolence, and recognized unsung community leaders and their acts of community service.

Zonique, daughter of legendary musicians "TI" and "Tiny" Harris and television star spoke about the importance of fatherhood and the great impact it has had in her life.

Hip-hop Artist YoYo and Social media icon Zonique also shared the importance of fatherhood and the positive impact it has on our community.

In promoting Dr. King's call to serve, we ask that all attendees bring canned goods and hygiene items to help our neighbors affected by the tornado.

More than 1500 youth delegates from across the state lined the steps of the Arkansas State Capitol to celebrate and participate with artistic presentations, musical performances and tributes honoring Dr. King.



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**Not just reserved for January, February:’ Arkansas MLK Council pursues year-round support**

[‘Not just reserved for January, February:’ Arkansas MLK Council pursues year-round support | News | uatrav.com](#)

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### May 11, 2023 Nonviolence Youth Summit, Stuttgart Arkansas

[Stuttgart school promotes unity through Nonviolence Youth Summit | KARK](#)

The Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission hosted the Nonviolence Youth Summit in Stuttgart. The Commission hosted educational sessions on nonviolence, anti-bullying, mental health, the importance of fatherhood at Stuttgart Junior High School Gymnasium. Breakout sessions took place from 8:00 AM-12:00 PM. The keynote session featured presentations on nonviolence, the importance of fatherhood, and anti-bullying by renowned actor, Lamman Rucker. Kevin Kelly, Fox 16 and Victory Over Violence and comedian Keith "Keef" Glason.

**THE PINE BLUFF COMMERCIAL**  
Committed to local news

Sunday, May 14, 2023 141st year, No. 366, 6 pages | pbcommercial.com | @pbcommercial | facebook.com/pinebluffcommercial

### Stuttgart youths hear nonviolence message

EPLINUS COLVIN  
PINE BLUFF COMMERCIAL

**STUTT GART** — Some would say the Nonviolence Youth Summit held by the Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission was right on time as the community received the devastating news that one of its own students, Johnny Howard, 18, was identified as deceased and the latest victim of violence in Stuttgart.

Under Executive Director DuShan Scarbrough, the commission hosted educational sessions on nonviolence, anti-bullying, mental health and the importance of fatherhood during Stuttgart's Nonviolence Youth Summit featuring a presentation by renowned actor

**VIDEO ONLINE**  
Highlights from nonviolence event in Stuttgart  
arkansasonline.com/514pbcom



Lamman Rucker. Open to the junior high and high school students, breakout sessions were had before coming together for the keynote session, also open to the public. KARK Fox 16 News and "Victory Over Violence" anchor Kevin Kelly spoke about bullying. Kelly challenged the students who admitted to being a bully to go and apologize to those who they bullied.

"This is where we start," Kelly said.

**See YOUTHS, PB3**

Keynote speaker and actor Lamman Rucker delivers a message of anti-bullying, mental health, and the importance of fatherhood during Stuttgart's Nonviolence Youth Summit. (Pine Bluff Commercial/Eplinus Colvin)

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#### YOUTHS

ly said as students made their way to hug and handshake with one another. Taking an anti-bullying oath and pledging to say something if they see something, the moment of seriousness was followed by some comedic relief by comedian Keith "Keef" Glason. Another highlight of the day was the presentation of the world-famous Rich-N-Tone duck calls to the guest as a welcome gift to the Rice and Duck Capital of the World.

Scarbroough gave his best efforts to blow the call to no avail, while Rucker managed to imitate the duck call sound receiving cheers from the crowd.

Rucker has appeared in daytime soap operas like "As the World Burns" and "All My Children," in movies like "The Temptations," Tyler Perry's films "Why Did I Get Married?," "Why Did I Get Married Too?," and "Meet the Browns," and on television as Jacob Greenleaf in the Oprah Winfrey Network drama series "Greenleaf" and the BET's drama "The Black Hampton," to name a few.

Rucker spoke about the value of fathers and mothers, respecting your bodies, and embracing and loving yourself as you are. He also spoke about the distorted reality of the entertainment industry and the lies it portrays that young people try to imitate, especially when it comes to gangs.

"I can tell you for a fact because I know some of these



Stuttgart band director Kevin Sherman is presented with a \$500 check by Arkansas Martin Luther King Jr. Commission Executive Director Duane Scarborough and state Rep. Jeremiah Moore. (Special to the Commercial)

people," he said. "I know the agendas, I know the images and the fakiness that's going on throughout the industry. A lot of the men out here talk the way they talk, that's not even how they behave. They bring, fronting and scared to death trying to tell y'all they gangstas and then y'all out here trying to be gangstas following somebody who's bring to y'all."

Rucker, who told the students he has been in their shoes as a teen, said he was bullied, jumped and shot at. "I've lost people that look just like you," he told the students, many who were grieving the loss of their schoolmate. "They fell into these traps."

Rucker said later that his personal experiences have influenced these conversations as he uses his platform to encourage young people, pushing them and challeng-

ing them with uncomfortable conversations of truth, sincerity and from the heart. When it came to at-risk youth, Rucker said it is important that adults listen to children.

"I think we do a lot of correction and we don't do enough listening, even if the child's message is a bit rough around the edges," he said. "It's really important to understand that these young people have feelings."

He also had his thoughts about gangs and what it stems from. "The gang issue, a lot of that is boys trying to father one another because some of our fathers aren't as present as they could or should be," said Rucker. "There are numerous reasons why that is the case, but also let's make sure that we are very careful about not just jumping on the bandwagon, particularly

on Black and Brown fathers, who just aren't there and don't take care of their kids because that's foolishness, because a lot of fathers are there and present."

Rucker said kids must also not be put in positions where they have to act like an adult. "It's about listening to these children, listening and creating an environment where they don't have to try to be the adult that they're not," he said. "Let's stop calling these young boys the man of the house when they're 12 just because things didn't work out with his father."

Very passionate about the subject, Rucker said he would like to come back to Stuttgart. Scarborough said The AMLEK works directly with youths and others, encouraging them to embrace alternatives to violence and discover their common humanity.

"Through activities that stress racial and cultural diversity, the AMLEK offers Arkansans a new understanding of their important roles in the communities, now and in the future," he said. "The AMLEK is guided by Dr. King's mission and philosophy of love, tolerance and nonviolence. It strives for social improvement in Arkansas, helping communities and organizations achieve new leadership and public service levels."

Scarbroough said he is currently working with school officials in Pine Bluff to bring a nonviolence rally to the school district in the near future. The Pine Bluff School District has had several young people in the past year die or be injured from gun violence.

"Nonviolence and bullying awareness go hand in hand, and it is the commission's goal to work with the school districts to promote a culture of nonviolence that would encourage proactive measures to prevent bullying," said Scarborough.

According to [StateBudget.gov](http://StateBudget.gov), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services says bullying diminishes a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate.

The mission of the Commission is to promote and preserve the life and legacy of King in the state of Arkansas.

Scarbroough also recognized leaders in Stuttgart during the Nonviolence Youth Summit who exemplify leadership, mentorship and volunteerism and those

who have made significant strides in community service amongst the youths in their community: Joe Alexander Jr., Kyia Nessley, Jennifer White, Vincent White, Frank Bledsoe and Paul Cobbin.

A special presentation was made to the Stuttgart High band, which performed at the state Capitol last week during the Commission's 30th anniversary celebration. Band director Kevin Sherman accepted a \$500 check from the Commission, presented by state Rep. Jeremiah Moore.

Students also received laptop computers and gift cards during a crowd participation contest.

Special recognition was presented to Mayor Norma Strabala; Stuttgart School District Superintendent Jeff McKinney; Stuttgart High Principal Pam Dean; and Stuttgart Junior High Principal Latana Robinson. A partnership was also formed with the Stuttgart Chamber of Commerce and the AMLEK.

"We were excited about the opportunity to host programming in Stuttgart and looking forward to the relationship we will build in Pine Bluff," said Scarborough. "The Stuttgart residents and youth have done a tremendous job volunteering at events hosted by the Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission throughout the state. They've traveled with us to Washington, D.C., Dallas, Rhyebille, and even Little Rock. The Commission looks forward to educating more young people about the King's legacy of nonviolence."