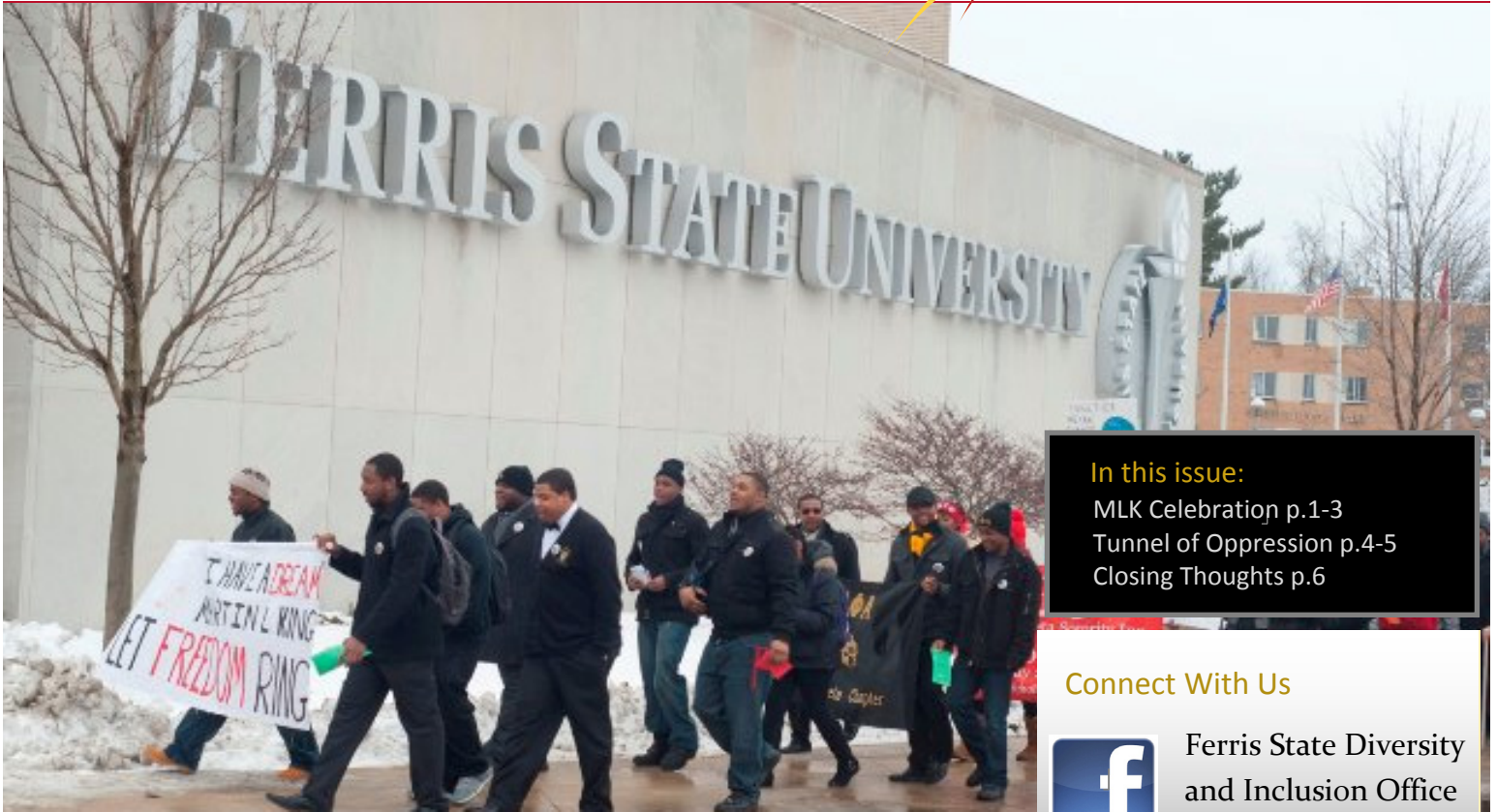




Expect Diversity

Ferris State University Diversity and Inclusion Office
Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration
Special Issue



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 Ferris State Diversity and Inclusion Office
Jim Crow Museum

 @DrDavidPilgrim

Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration By: Alex Lorenz

For 25 years, the Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration has been a signature event led by the Office of Multicultural Student Services at Ferris State University. This year's theme was "Carrying on the Dream." According to Mike Wade, co-chair of the MLK Celebration Planning Committee, those who planned the celebration tried to offer a variety of events that would afford many opportunities for student engagement.

This year's theme was "Carrying on the Dream." The goal was to get students to identify with an event or an initiative. Students were challenge to carry on Dr. King's dream by



Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity walks proudly at the Freedom March



Students prepare for the Freedom March from the IRC to Rankin.

March – a reenactment of the protest marches from the 1960s which aimed to end segregation in schools and unfair discrimination in the work place. At Ferris, the Freedom March went from the IRC to the Rankin Center. Despite the cold, snowy weather, many people participated.

“We were glad that the students, faculty, and staff and the community members came out to support and didn’t use [the weather] as an excuse,” said Wade. “Dr. King had to walk miles in sweltering heat, so to walk, not even a full mile, back to the IRC on the route that we took was really not asking too much. It was a great turn out and I hope everyone enjoyed it.”

participating in an event, taking up a cause, or volunteering in a service project. According to Wade, “Each event is a different type of event; if you want to be out front, you can be at the Student Tribute, or, if you’re more reserved and just want to see a good show, you can come to the event (“The Meeting”) tonight. So there’s really something for everyone.”

First started in 1987, OMSS does dozens of diversity and inclusion-related events each year. These events include the Student Tribute programs, Five Star diversity speakers, the Tunnel of Oppression, and the Freedom



A scene from “The Meeting.”

Dr. King undoubtedly had many accomplishments during his life. Along with his famous, “I Have A Dream” speech, he published several books about the oppression that African American’s faced. Most importantly, he was one of the main leaders in the American Civil Rights Movement.

“I think it’s important to know where we came from so we can accurately gauge progress, better assess the issues that are still out there, and continue to make progress,” said Khayree Williams, Tunnel of Oppression Coordinator. “Things have definitely gotten better, but we still have a long way to go and it really doesn’t get any better if we all don’t work together.”



As far as what students were supposed to get out of the MLK celebration, Wade said that he hopes students are inspired to be better and also always continue to grow. Williams agreed.

“I think that Ferris is looking for ways to make the climate better for all students and looking for ways to increasingly diversify the student body. I think that the MLK celebration plays a part in this by putting on programs to bring everyone together, to keep Dr. King’s dream alive,” said Williams.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day was first celebrated on January 20, 1986 - King’s birthday. The idea for MLK day was thought of by labor unions in contract negotiations. Over the years, some states were reluctant to celebrate the holiday. It has also been called “Human Rights Day” and “Civil Rights Day” in the past. Today, it is celebrated on the third Monday of January. Hopefully this celebration will continue to be a tradition at Ferris for many years.

Photo by Liz London



Students enjoy a unique meal at the Soul Food Unity Dinner held in Westview Dining Hall.

Save the Date!

The Grand Opening for the new Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia will be on Thursday, April 26, 2012, at 11 a.m.



Tunnel of Oppression

By: Sam Bankey

In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Ferris State University held an event to educate students about hate and violence in today's world.

The Tunnel of Oppression came to Ferris in 2005 after several other universities around the nation hosted similar exhibits for their students. Until this year, the Tunnel was displayed in the Rankin Student Center; this year Kharyee Williams, the event coordinator, decided to move it to the Ward Hall basement.

The basement gave the vibe of a somber and dark atmosphere where students could better understand the different types of hate happening

in the world. It also offered a larger space, giving students the opportunity to digest more information and not feel rushed by others viewing the same information.

The types of oppression that were shown during the event were not just about racism – there were images and information on many different kinds of hatred including hatred toward women, little people, soldiers, the gay community, as well as information on sex trafficking, dowry violence, and honor killings – daughters killed by their families because they didn't follow their cultural norms.

According to Williams, “Things have gotten better but we still have a long way to go. It's not going to get better unless we all work together.”

Jasmine Good, a freshman in criminal justice, says she was most impacted by the human trafficking piece in the tunnel.

“It was pretty disturbing,” says Good. “Some of the images I didn't like. I can't get the mental images out of my head. It motivates you to take constructive action.”

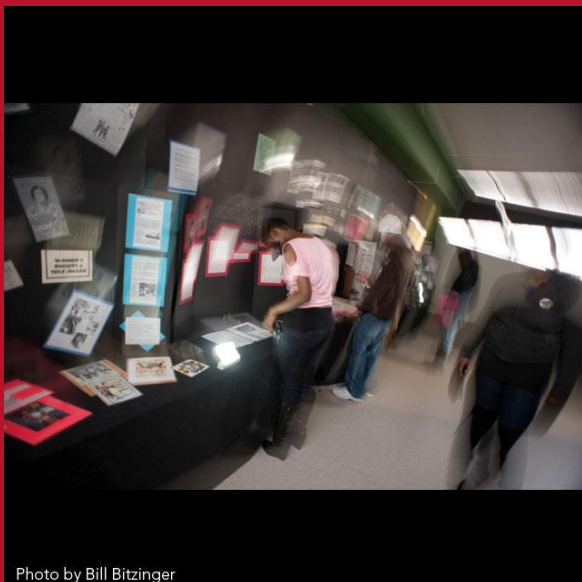
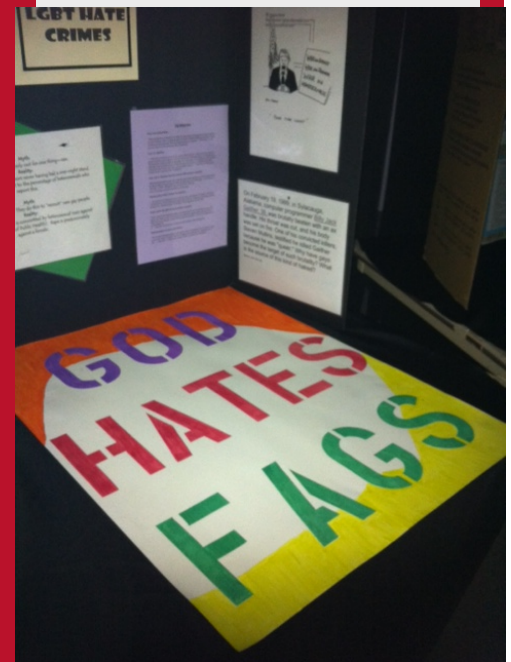


Photo by Bill Bitzinger

Tunnel of Oppression

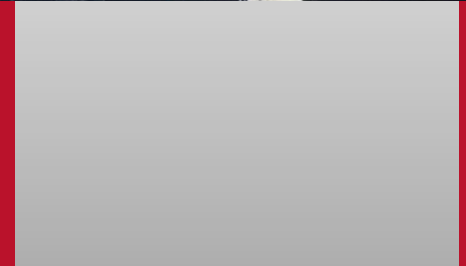
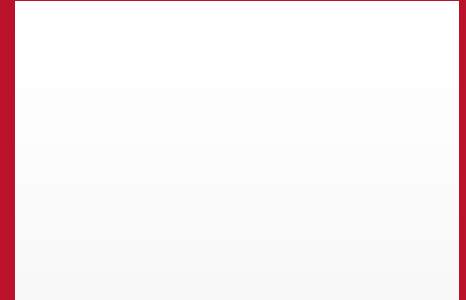
By: Sam Bankey

Although some things in the Tunnel of Oppression bothered Good, she doesn't discourage people from attending the event.

"I think everyone should come and see it. Everybody can relate to at least one or two of these issues."

The Tunnel of Oppression was just one of the many events held on campus during Martin Luther King Week. Dr. King was not just a believer in civil rights; he was an advocate for human rights as well. During his lifetime, Dr. King worked toward ending racial discrimination through civil obedience and non-violent means. He was

the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 for his work. The holiday of his birthday is recognized on the third Monday of January and is intended to empower individuals and create solutions to social problems. It is said to be a National Day of Service – "a day on, not a day off." It should also be noted that Dr. King was a strong advocate for poor people, of all colors, and he was an opponent of the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War.



Closing Thoughts

By: Dr. David Pilgrim

This is a time in the academic year when we pause and reflect on the life and message of Dr. King.

Thank you to the members of the Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Planning

Committee for organizing this year's schedule of events. The Committee always does excellent work and this year's committee, under the leadership of Michael Wade and Nicholas Campau, continued the tradition of providing excellent and thought-provoking programming.

My favorite part of the week's activities is the annual Freedom March, which honors the courage of civil rights activists from the past. It warms my heart to hear today's Ferris students singing the freedom songs that sustained the protestors during the civil rights era. It was good to see so many students, faculty, staff, and community members at all the events, including the March. Thank you again to all the organizers of and participants in the Martin Luther King Celebration, and thank you to President Eisler and the President's Council for funding the events. And, thank you to the students who created this newsletter.

