



# Cal State LA Undergrad Essay Contest

In Honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**In 500 words or less:**

*Share your thoughts on the importance  
of service and why it makes a  
difference at Cal State LA.  
How does service further the goals  
and ethos of the civil rights movement?*

For more info visit our website.  
[www.calstatela.edu/engagement](http://www.calstatela.edu/engagement)

Prizes:

1st - \$350

2nd - \$200

3rd - \$100



CENTER FOR  
**ENGAGEMENT, SERVICE &  
THE PUBLIC GOOD**

1st Place

## THE PATH TO HAPPINESS

By: Amy To

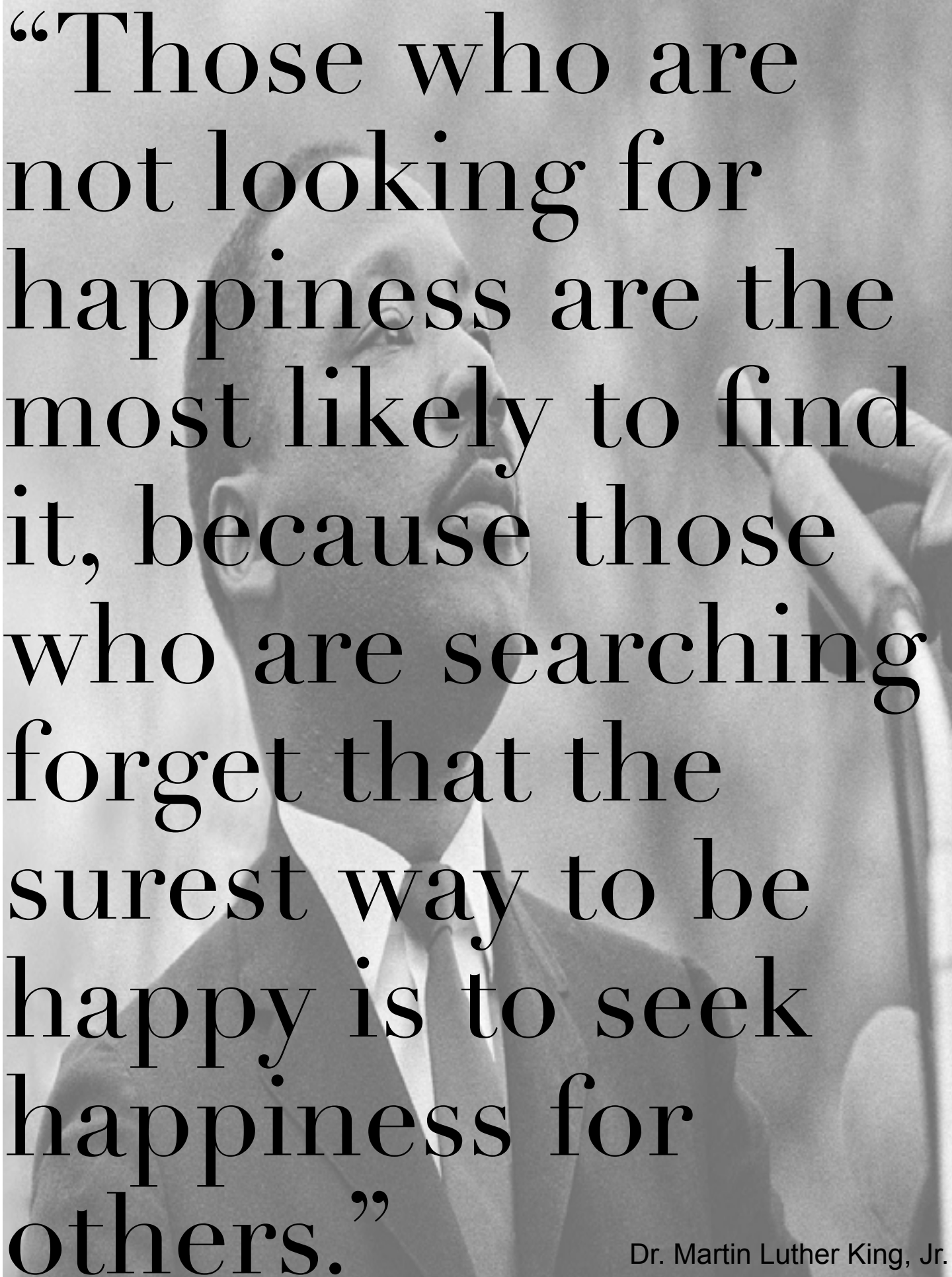
“Those who are not looking for happiness are the most likely to find it, because those who are searching forget that the surest way to be happy is to seek happiness for others”, once stated by the revolutionary Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The service of helping others shall not be seen as a barrier to reaching happiness, but rather, a step towards it. Out of all the brilliant things said by Dr. King, I found this quote to be the one I live by and one that I could deeply relate to.

In high school, I didn't spend my weekends as any typical student would. I would spend my free times at the animal shelter helping clean the animals and volunteering to serve food on Sundays for homeless individuals. However, I looked forward to Saturdays the most because I was able to volunteer at C. Lamar Mayer Learning Center at Cal State LA as a teacher's assistant, assisting students from grades K-12.

“Life's most persistent and urgent question is, “What are you doing for others?”-Martin Luther King Jr.”(Scott). To my surprise, I found volunteering to be a win-win situation, benefiting both parties. Having exposure to these sorts of extracurricular activities allowed me to discover that my happiness came from helping others through the ability for me to provide my service, time, heart and effort to a greater cause. At C. Lamar Mayer Learning Center, I spread positivity throughout the classroom by helping my students and I also learned that lending a simple helping hand could put the biggest smile on somebody else's face. Seeing how I had an impact on these children, led me to discover that being in the helping profession would be where my happiness came from. The extreme importance of helping others is equally as important to achieving happiness in life. I learned that through helping others, you are able to find yourself. Although I am just in my first year of college, volunteering for just several days out of the week resulted in me discovering my happiness and passion in life. My volunteering experience at C. Lamar Mayer Learning Center at Cal State LA was life changing because it brought to light the burning passion I have to help and teach young children with disabilities.

Service furthers the goals and ethos of the civil rights movement that many, like Dr. King, fought for because the goal is to have equal rights despite sex, race, disability, or other physical characteristics. The C. Mayer Learning Center “offers children with and without disabilities an opportunity to receive individualized attention for their learning needs from highly qualified credential candidates” (“C. Lamar Mayer Learning Center,” n.d. para. 2). Service towards this program furthers the goals of the civil rights movement by prohibiting discrimination towards children with disabilities, providing them with equality through education and extra help if they need it.

Citation:  
Scott, Ryan. “Here's How You Can Give Back on MLK Day.” *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 16 Jan. 2015, [www.forbes.com/sites/causeintegration/2015/01/16/you-want-to-give-back-on-mlk-day-heres-how/](http://www.forbes.com/sites/causeintegration/2015/01/16/you-want-to-give-back-on-mlk-day-heres-how/).  
Unknown. “The C. Lamar Mayer Learning Center.” *California State University Los Angeles*, 21 June 2017, [www.calstatela.edu/academic/\\_ccoe/groups/lamarmayer.htm](http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/_ccoe/groups/lamarmayer.htm)



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