



# 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**

2nd Place

## HEARING THE UNHEARD

By: Brian Ubiadas

One's character is developed through interests, perspectives and experiences. As adults, engaging with our community contributes to shaping our identity. The learning process begins in the classroom and continues through life encounters. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, "the function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education." Different learning channels exist and interacting with others provides a learning experience that formal education cannot offer.

In Los Angeles County, where the cost of living is excessively high, surviving with a monthly income of less than \$1200, a family income that I encounter regularly with Head Start Program applicants, is burdensome. Such income also deprives a family access to nutritious food, which ought to be a basic need. These can happen in two ways- from food being unaffordable or by living in a food desert and lacking reliable transportation, or both. These factors lead to increased susceptibility to illness, poor health status and quality of life. For children, growth and development are compromised. My Head Start experience began as a required service learning aspect for a Community Nutrition course, but I continued to be an active volunteer, spending roughly 3 hours a week with the program, as I desired to be further see the issues associated with limited income and brainstorm ways for a solution. The unfortunate reality is the demand for the offered services, as with many services that cater to low income and underserved populations, exceed available resources.

We all come from different walks of life, some of us with better realities than others. Engaging with our neighbors and our community expose us to new perspectives and further reinforce our existing viewpoints. We ought to be united and have compassion for those who are disadvantaged. As Martin Luther King Jr. also said, "In the end, we will remember not the works of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." The main goals of the Civil Rights Movement were to end segregation and provide equality for all. Despite the lack of signs stating "whites only," and people of color and women now holding respectable high-status professions, the issues that initiated the movement undoubtedly still exist today. Gentrification's attempt to destroy "ghetto" neighborhoods and transforming it to "urban" and "hip" areas that correspond to higher class status is a trending example of such issue. Low-income families are forced away from their homes as the cost of living further increases. Through unity with our community, we are able to further understand the present discrepancies. We are a source of support, the megaphones of the ignored and unheard.

Citation:  
Stieber, Z. (2014) Martin Luther King Jr. Quotes: 33 Quotes on Education, [Courage, Love, Racism, Violence, and Service]. *The Epoch Times*. Retrieved from [http://www.theepochtimes.com/martin-luther-king-jr-quotes-33-quotes-on-education-courage-love-racism-violence-and-service\\_454112.html](http://www.theepochtimes.com/martin-luther-king-jr-quotes-33-quotes-on-education-courage-love-racism-violence-and-service_454112.html)  
Smith, C. (2014). *The Danger of Silence* [Online video]. USA:TED. Retrieved January 21, 2018, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NiktZgImdIY>

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