

# COMMUNITY CARES

TCAC AmeriCorps Newsletter — February 2023

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

### AmeriCorps CEO on Black History Month

During Black History Month, we honor the heritage of Black leaders and volunteers who not only commit or committed themselves to service but also inspire others to do the same. When zip codes determine access to opportunities in far too many communities, we must consider what a more *just* and *equitable* future might hold. AmeriCorps programs draw on the dream of creating the Beloved Community—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, global vision in which all people can share in the wealth of the earth—to improve lives, foster civic engagement and strengthen communities across the country. Our programs aim to build bridges and repair national divides through service.

Michael D. Smith, AmeriCorps CEO, recently joined Jacqueline Innocent, Habitat for Humanity International senior vice president of integrated programs, and Kirby Page, Habitat for Humanity volunteer, on their ongoing series [+You](#) to discuss Dr. King's Beloved Community and the intersection of volunteerism and systematic inequality in the U.S. today.

Below are links to a few highlights from their conversation:

1. [Solving Inequity Together](#)
2. [Serving and Learning](#)
3. [the Transformative Power of Service](#)

If you wish to watch the entire video click [here](#).

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- "Where there is no vision, there is no hope."

- **George Washington**

**Carver**  
SCIENTIST



**A Tribute to Iconic Black Figures**— Read the full article [here](#). Read on and learn more about Iconic Black Figures.

Black History Month has to be more than a running list of "Did you know?" fun facts. It has to be more than regurgitated Instagram posts with red, black, and green borders or an opportunity for advertisers and TV stations to break out their dashiki-print art treatments.

Black history is everyone's history. Just as there has never been humanity without Black people, there is no human history without Black history. This fact should fuel our desire to create space for a true celebration of Black history, one that goes beyond nostalgic remembrances of events from 50, 100, or 400 years ago through rose-colored glasses. The history of man cannot be told through pop quizzes about who invented the stop light or the pacemaker, and Black history has no right being told in this fashion, either.

It's also important to remember that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. didn't live his life in black and white. His life was lived in color, at a time when the vast majority of Americans looked upon him with distaste while questioning the peacefulness of his rallies, and the American government itself worked to cut down his character. It's often easier to remember these figures as one-dimensional beings eternally suspended in the amber of their moment, but that can only happen if we fail to understand their full story, particularly if we're fortunate enough to be around as their story is still being told.

# VOICES

from  
the  
Corps

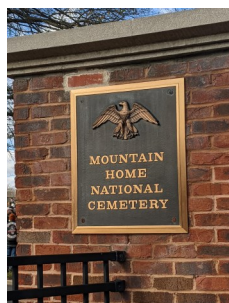
## SERVICE DAYS

Community Cares AmeriCorps members continued to honor Veterans in December by placing wreaths on headstones at National Cemeteries and Memorial Gardens across the state.

**Amy D. with Bucky's ETSU Pantry —**

She partnered with Mountain Home Cemetery, in Mountain Home, TN to lay wreaths with individuals of that community. (those who are unfamiliar with the area this is near Johnson City, TN). She went with the photographs below —

Wreaths Across America came to Johnson City on December 17 this year to gather volunteers and community members for a wreath laying ceremony. As a spouse of an Army veteran, I was very moved by this. My husband was unable to attend, so I brought my youngest daughter along for this experience and service day. The ceremony was beautiful, and being the emotional person I am, it brought tears to my eyes. We have two family members forever resting in Mountain Home Cemetery. Even though we attended these funerals, I do not think either of us realized how vast this cemetery truly is. We were both overwhelmed and glad to see how many people came together for this day of service and to honor our deceased veterans.



Despite the cold, we both went to work carrying boxes of wreaths and laying them below headstones. We talked about the certainty that this is where my husband will someday rest, and how important it is to be kind and do things for our veterans, living and deceased. We talked about PTSD and the reality many veterans face when they return home. We also talked about how many only return home after death. As we talked, we also had moments of silence for each veteran we laid wreaths for. When our first area was completed, we helped break down boxes and moved along to the next area. By the time we were finished in the second area, we were both exhausted and freezing. But we were also humbled and full of gratitude.

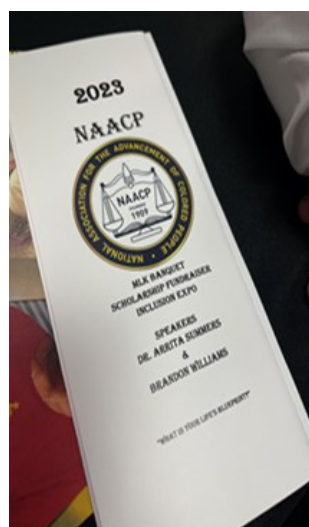


After members set out and placed wreaths in December, we started off the New Year with the birthday and National Day of Service, for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Starting us off with her participation in the NAACP Banquet in celebration of MLK Day, is Tracy G. with her photos and story to follow. The last NAACP Banquet was held in 2020 just before COVID shut-downs.

**Tracy G. from Dickson Housing Authority —**

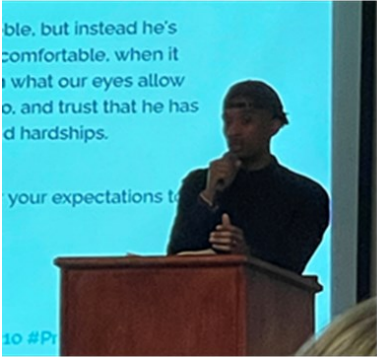
On January 16th, my son and I attended the NAACP Banquet which served the topic of "Inclusion". Inclusion can mean so many things to different people. Some may consider it as being included in a family function, a school club, or even a conversation. For others, it goes deeper. For the banquet, inclusion meant "the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized."





One of the speakers for the event was Brandon Williams. Brandon is the founder of an organization called “WaveEffect Developmental League,” a league of young men who are focused on helping the youth exceed in basketball, life skills, and development.

Brandon’s speech stood out to me because we are related and I know firsthand about some of the things he spoke about. A lot of the things that were instilled in him, was also instilled in me—only from a white mom. He spoke about being raised with the idea that black young men had to dress and carry themselves a certain way in order to have a chance at any kind of success. He was taught to dress with starch-pressed pants, nice clean sneakers, shirts tucked in, and topped off with a belt. He was raised in the church, wasn’t allowed to hang with other kids, and grades were a high priority. Brandon spoke about basketball always being his heart—after God and his mom, of course. When he got to high school his name and ball skills were well known. His coaches spoke highly of him and schools came from different states just to watch him play. However, he met a young lady and many felt as though she wasn’t a match for him.

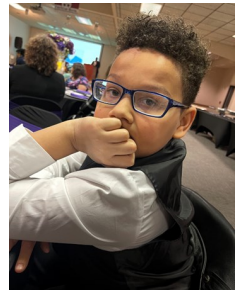


This is Brandon. He wore his hat backwards as an example of how he doesn't worry about how people *"thinks he should dress"*. He says his hats have become a part of him as a statement of who he is.

Brandon is also my cousin.

He spoke about his coaches telling him that he was being watched and that focusing on a young lady wouldn't look good for his basketball image. They told him if he was going to date, not to be seen with her in the hallways or even in public. You see the young lady was of a different race-she was white. Even parents of his teammates would see him with his girlfriend and they would run back to the coach saying it just didn't look right and that they didn't want someone like him representing their team. He spoke of being in a restaurant with the young lady and a family member of hers came and made a big scene and made the girl leave.

Brandon ended up graduating from high school and playing on a NBA G League across seas. Once he returned, he met a new lady (who is also white) married her and they are both missionaries in Africa. He is a coach, a teacher, and a minister there. She is a teacher and is now expecting their first child. He said that he has learned that he can be his own person and not have to dress or act in an expected way in order to be accepted. He has learned that he can be included in whatever successes that he sets his mind to and he doesn't let the presumed opinions of other dictate what he wants out of life.



I managed to get a picture of my handsome son, Shaun.

He enjoyed the banquet and discovered many topics he now wants to research and learn more about...

Such as, what are Masons, exactly what does his grandmother do in the NAACP, and what is "Inclusion"

This is Joe Sweatt. He is the current President of the Dickson Chapter of the NAACP.

Joe is also a relative of mine.



Erin C. from Next Steps at Vanderbilt University—

I attended the MLK Breakfast and it was wonderful! Multiple preachers and labor spokespeople gave speeches. The speeches were very inspirational, you could tell that they raised the energy in the room and that so many people listening felt invigorated to go out and create positive change. The speakers talked about how Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. taught that bystanders/waiting for things to change just prolongs problems, and that if we want positive change we have to actively fight for it (peacefully). They also connected Dr. MLK Jr.'s teachings to current events, such as violent attacks on antiracist protestors and the Jan. 2021 attack on the Capitol. Lastly, there was a singing performance and communal singing, which also greatly boosted morale in the room!



Rose S. & Tanner C. from Camp Ba Yo Ca—

She and Tanner completed a service day for MLK day. They started the day with watching the MLK "I Have a Dream" speech. We picked up trash on Happy Hollow Road in Wears Valley, TN. We felt the community on Happy Hollow would appreciate the trash along the road being picked up to better the environment that they call home. We wanted to recommit by volunteering to clean up this community's road and keeping it clean.



Amy D. from Bucky's ETSU Pantry—

As part of Green Thumbs Unite, I had a planning meeting with the Community Garden for ETSU, Bryson Boothe. Bryson is also the Sustainability Coordinator for Sodexo at ETSU. We talked about ways to improve the community garden, as well as building partnerships with the Biology Department to start plants earlier by utilizing their greenhouse space. I have written a community garden guide for students to utilize when they choose to participate in the community garden. The ground is frozen solid in the garden plots currently, but we had hoped to be able to weed beds. I have been an avid flower gardener for almost 20 years, and I love learning more about plants and sharing my knowledge with others that may be gardening for the first time. During our meeting, we discussed expanding beds this spring, as well as getting a beehive to teach students about beekeeping and pollination. I have sent out a few emails to seed companies requesting donations for the community garden, and we made plans to attend two seed swaps that will be happening in the next six weeks. Green thumbs uniting is a beautiful thing, especially when working together to improve our garden space and find better ways to coordinate our efforts.



The second part of my day took me to the McKinney Center in Jonesborough. The McKinney Center was hosting a Martin Luther King Jr. art exhibit featuring work from elementary school children. It was all so beautiful and I adore children's art. These children did a phenomenal job sharing what they've learned about Martin Luther King Jr. Their art was my favorite part of the day. I spent some time talking to volunteer working the exhibit and learned about what all the McKinney Center has to offer. They host workshops, run an annual food drive, and teach art to students throughout the summer. I look forward to returning for their next art exhibit.





**Justin A. from Memphis Housing Authority—**

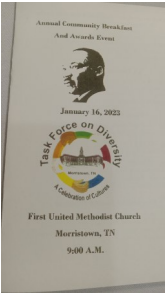
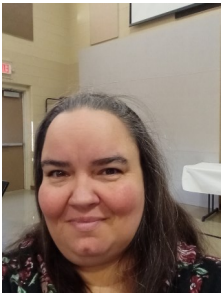
The Martin Luther King, Jr Day of Service, held in Memphis, was a great realization of the unity and equity in all facets of life that those in his generation and before strove for. Personally, my day of service was two-fold: the educating of a future generation and the veneration of the older generation in my very own family. On one hand I was able to hang out with my nephew and take him to the National Civil Rights Museum for a tour as I brought ten canned goods to the event and bought a year membership as well, he learned so much. Also, he and I were able to go and see and honor both of my grandmothers who were integral members of their unions and actually marched on the frontlines with the movement. My nephew and I have both learned that service begins at home.

“We can all be great, because we can all serve.” – Dr. King



**Kathy M. from Morristown Housing Authority—**

Celebrating MLK Day at First United Methodist Church MLK Breakfast. Day of service to AmeriCorps and MHA. It was an honor and privilege to be a part of such a celebratory moment. Just as Martin Luther King had a dream and that dream came to pass.



**Samona A. from MATS —**

For MLK Day I went to Bethel Missionary Baptist Church and the speaker was Minister A. Nicole Tate-Phillips. She done her preaching on Dr. Martin King. I didn't know this but his real name was Michael. His father changed it to Martin Luther King. I took a picture but it was blurry. The picture was of the speaker. The songs that we sung was “Lift Every Voice.” The other song we sang as we were leaving was “We shall Overcome.”

**Tanayha M. from Highlands Residential Services —**

She said it's an awful picture but it works! :) For the week of MLK day I helped set up the bring a bag, fill a bag events. We took tags off of hundreds of donated brand new clothing items, folded them and separated them by size. On the 14th I was present to help assist our community find their clothing needs, keep the area clean and organized. I helped mostly the plus side individuals, which really made my heart happy with their reaction to finding clothes they need in their size! (A few expressed how much more expensive clothes were or just simply hard to find and we luckily had stuff all the way up to 3-4X for men and women.)



Rebecca W. from Grow Oak Ridge—

For MLK day 2023, I picked up trash in the Melton Lake Greenway in Oak Ridge, TN. This is a greenway that I walk on every day, and for the last few years I have noticed that it is getting "trashy." I'm not sure why. Are the trash trucks letting trash loose? Or are people just littering more? I am sad to say I think it is the latter. Anyway, about a year ago I bought myself a trash grabber, and I make it a habit to pick up trash about once a month along this trail. I am not the only one, and have met other folks doing the same, I'm happy to say. In fact there is a Trail Alliance here in Oak Ridge and they invited me to their meetings when they met me picking up trash one day. I have not participated in that yet, but I do get a strange sense of accomplishment picking up trash! I think we get tidier as we get older.

Anyway... I decided on Jan. 16 that would be the perfect day to pick up trash, in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who worked so hard to improve our nation for all people. Also, I was recovering from a case of Covid, so this is something I could do outside. I appreciate Dr. King's dedication and of course he paid a much bigger price than most people do in helping their communities! But I do like to think that every good act is helpful, and so on Jan. 16, I tidied up the park in his memory. May we all find a little place in the world we can improve.



From the TCAC AmeriCorps Staff, thank you for getting out and getting things done on these National Days of Service! America is a much better place with your relentless help and efforts to make it a better place.





# WE HONOR

## MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

EDUCATE

Learn about Dr. King and his legacy

ELEVATE

Support local Black-owned businesses

ENGAGE

Volunteer in our community

# Volunteer Tennessee

Our State Service Commission wants us to remember, Winter Weather can still happen and it is still dangerous. Winter storms create a higher risk of car accidents, hypothermia, frostbite, carbon monoxide poisoning, and heart attacks from overexertion. Winter storms including blizzards can bring extreme cold, freezing rain, snow, ice, and high winds.

A winter storm can:

- Last a few hours or several days.
- Cut off heat, power, and communication services.
- Put older adults, children, sick individuals, and pets at greater risk.

How can you protect yourself from Winter Weather?

Know the difference between these winter weather terms —

**Winter Storm Warning:** Issued when hazardous winter weather in the form of heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet is imminent or occurring. Winter Storm Warnings are usually issued 12 to 24 hours before the event is expected to begin.

**Winter Storm Watch:** Alerts the public to the possibility of a blizzard, heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet. Winter Storm Watches are usually issued 12 to 48 hours before the beginning of a Winter Storm.





# IN THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY

## Monday, February 6th —

Data Collection reporting on January 2023 are due! Message me if there will be a late submission for any reason.

Monthly Member Check-In at 5PM EST (4PM CT) These are **NOT** mandatory. These are to create a safe space to bring everyone together to check in on you and hear how your service is going throughout your term.

## Monday, February 20th —

TCAC Offices will be CLOSED in observance of President's Day. Some service site locations will be closed as well, if they are you do not report for service.

## February Birthdays

### A Great Big Happy AmeriBirthday to YOU!

#### Janice M.

celebrates a Birthday on Feb. 15th she serves at Crossville Housing Authority!

#### Samona A.

celebrates a Birthday on Feb. 17th she serves at the Ministerial Association Temporary Shelter (MATS)!

#### Kathy M.

celebrates a Birthday on Feb. 17th she serves at Morristown Housing Authority!

#### Hallie A.

celebrates a Birthday on Feb. 28th she also serves at MATS!



## JUST FOR FUN!

### Have you seen it yet? Everyone is talking about it!

The hit new HBOMax show — everyone is obsessing over, *The Last of Us*. This is a streaming series based off of a PlayStation system exclusive video game. The video game is: a 2013 action-adventure game developed by Naughty Dog and published by Sony Computer Entertainment. Players control Joel, a smuggler tasked with escorting a teenage girl, Ellie, across a post-apocalyptic United States. *The Last of Us* is played from a third-person perspective. The show is described as: Joel and Ellie, a pair connected through the harshness of the world they live in, are forced to endure brutal circumstances and ruthless killers on a trek across a post-outbreak America.

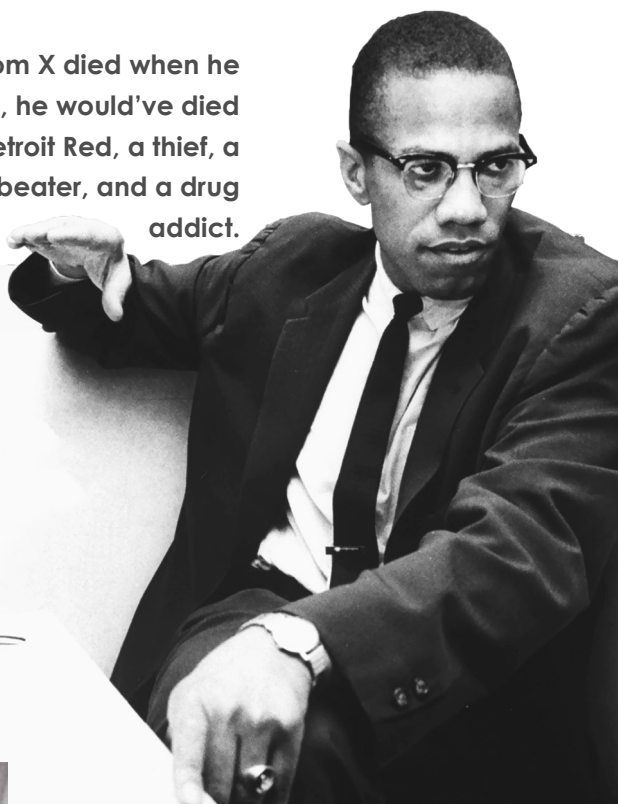
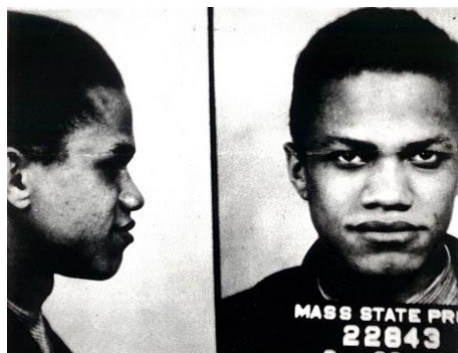


We all know the world enjoys shows themed around a post-apocalyptic world, so creators of the award winning show *Chernobyl* brought *The Last of Us* to life with Pedro Pascal (from the *Mandalorian* — come onnnn new season.) playing Joel and Bella Ramsey (from *Game of Thrones*) as Ellie. Click [here](#) to watch the trailer. Would you watch *The Last of Us*? Would you play it?



In history, people's mistakes often lead to their great destiny. We all have a story to tell.

If Malcom X died when he was 20, he would've died as a Detroit Red, a thief, a woman beater, and a drug addict.



A 29-year-old Dr. King could've lost his life prior to his assassination by the hands of Izola Ware Curry. She attempted to take his life during a book signing in 1958. This would have prevented his sit-ins, boycotts, and marches for Civil Rights. There would have never been an, "I Have a Dream," speech.



If Maya Angelou died when she was 20, she would've died a prostitute and single mother.

