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Volunteers Spend Holiday Serving Community

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By Jeff Tang

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - Martin Luther King Jr. always preached about service. On Monday, people took his words to heart, and turned them into action at the Nashville Rescue Mission.

Rescue Mission resident Ivan Alexeev kept looking over his shoulder. He could not help but look at the new mural in the Nashville Rescue Mission dining hall, and at the people who are painting it.

"It's a great group of volunteers who are making the center look better for us," said Alexeev.

Volunteers with Hands on Nashville, Allstate Insurance, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and Alpha Delta Omega and Kappa Lambda Omega graduate chapters showed up at the Mission on Martin Luther King Jr. Day to paint murals throughout the facility.

Many pictures are inspired by the Bible; one depicts David's hand as he prepared to slay Goliath. Artist Anthony Billups picked each image specifically for the men and women who will look at them each day.

"The odds are against them, and as they walk through here I hope they see the murals as a reminder they can overcome and win in the end," said Billups.

The paintings are also a tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. The holiday provided many of the volunteers the time to be there.

"If you go back, you know, it's about giving. He did that his whole life. We're here to be role models and follow him," said volunteer Cynthia Whitfield.

Mayor Karl Dean was one of the many volunteers who painted at the mission. During his time, he announced that the city had won a \$200,000 grant to help increase volunteerism in the Metro area.

The Cities of Service leadership grant will pay for the hiring of a chief service officer who will help coordinate the different volunteer organizations in the city.

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