

# DAVIDSON A.M.

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## MLK Day means service by many

By **Natalia Mielczarek**  
THE TENNESSEAN

Grace Johnson-Bann could sleep in on Monday, surf the Internet and watch TV.

Instead, she and dozens of others will grab paintbrushes and beautify the Nashville Rescue Mission in observance of Martin Luther King Day.

### **HANDS ON NASHVILLE**

Hands on Nashville is a local agency that helps volunteers find service opportunities. To find out more about service day on Martin Luther King Jr. Day or other projects, call 298-1108 or go to [www.hon.org](http://www.hon.org).

"It gives me a good feeling to say that today, in honor of this man, I can be a little bit like him by working toward a goal of fairness and equality," said Grace, a senior at Hunters Lane High School. She's also a member of

A day off work for many, the third Monday in January has become known as a day of service across the country, endorsed by King's widow, Coretta Scott King, and President Barack Obama.

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# Work will honor King

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the Youth Volunteer Corps of America, a national organization that connects teenagers with community service.

"His goal was to have people united and have fair treatment, and he reached some of his goals through the civil rights movement, but there's still injustice in the world. In honor of him, we should work together to get rid of the injustice."

## More than one day

The murals that Grace, local artist Anthony Billups and volunteers will paint will adorn hallways and the dining room at the downtown Nashville Rescue Mission, which provides food, shelter and spiritual guidance to the homeless.

The effort is part of Hands on Nashville's day of service on MLK Day. It's also an opportunity to motivate folks to start 2010 with doing good deeds for others — and keep at it.

"It's a day on, not a day off," said Lisa Davis with Hands on Nashville, a local group that helps people find volunteering opportunities.

"For us, especially being in the South, it's so important to honor his legacy and his wishes to engage the community in service and that everybody can make a difference, and everybody can be the change. We're hoping that all of this service and this momentum to serve continues throughout the year."

That's the message that Atlanta's King Center, established by Coretta Scott King, advocates.

"It is a day of volunteering to feed the hungry, rehabilitate housing, tutoring those who can't read, mentoring at-risk youngsters, consoling the broken-hearted and a thousand other projects for building the beloved community of his dream," reads Scott King's quote on the center's Web site.

"We call you to commemorate this holiday by making your personal commitment to serve humanity



**Kelsey Horak and Hannah Oakley sorted shoes for Soles4Souls as part of Global Youth Service Day April 25. SUBMITTED PHOTO**

with the vibrant spirit of unconditional love that was his greatest strength, and which empowered all of the great victories of his leadership."

## Message of hope

The dining hall mural at the mission will portray Jesus feeding the hungry, said Lee Ann Dichtel, mission's special events coordinator.

"If you've ever been in the mission, it can look a bit institutional so we're trying to lighten up the place, give it some life," she said.

"You think about some of the people and where they came from, and to have these white walls to look at, it's not really encouraging. This sends a message to them that others care."

Like Rosa Guzman, a senior at Hume-Fogg Magnet High School, who will participate in the MLK service day for the first time, she said.

"We've made a lot of progress, but there's room for improvement," said Rosa, also a member of the Youth Volunteer Corps of America.

"In Nashville, it's a racial-income type issue. Also, in middle school, people would only sit with other people who were the same. We need to reach out to each other and learn that we might look different but share many things in common."

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