

2009 Ashland Martin Luther King Day Celebration Report



Claudia's personal notes: This year we collaborated deeply with the Medford Martin Luther King Day celebration. There continues to be a deep divide between the towns populations and one of the way it manifests is by producing these two events separately.

Anecdotally, I've heard from both Medford and Ashland townspeople that they did not know about the other towns event (despite them both having over a decades history). The Ashland event is very well attended. The Medford event has more performers than audience despite having a larger African American population than Ashland. Freda Casillas from audience development and myself attended their meetings and helped to curate of their show. This commitment to join Medford and Ashland into a weekend of events rather than competing events resulted in shared speakers, artists, and audience. The Medford audience remained small however.

Successes in this collaboration were the shared Buckworld One performers who performed to acclaim on each stage. I performed a poem written by their audience in their show which was received well. We both had committee members attending the others events in support.

Less successful engagement strategies included: We took a bus to Medford but had low attendance in bus riders. Dolan was scheduled to do a short speech at the Ashland

event, but was unfortunately a dry speaker who spoke 7 minutes longer than agreed. This meant our keynote Rickerby Hinds had to edit down his own remarks.

While attending each others meetings resulted in knowing each other better Freda and I agree we cannot add a trip to Medford to our collective plate on a weekly basis. We also do not want to produce the Medford event. Hopefully they will retain what we have shared and have a stronger event because of this. I will make it a point to attend their event in the future.

The line into the show continues to be huge. Lining everyone up in the sun really does help. This year we decided to have a secondary space and live stream to it. Local theater Oregon Stage Works donated their space. Unfortunately the feed failed due to a lack of set up from EQ.TV.

Adebisi Adeleke, an OSF guest musician from Death and the Kings Horseman performed African Talking Drum. He is a master and it was a charming beginning to the show and a great treat for all of us. The video clip of Obama and "Yes We Can" by the Black Eyed Peas was an energetic introduction of our theme and general excitement about the election of the first African American President. Our MC DL Richardson gave some great opening remarks. He really provides content to these shows. He also goes over and adds a song he insists in singing. This is the second time he's done it and I think it might be a pattern we should simply schedule time for. John Dolan, is an older gentleman who lives in the Rogue Valley. He was a freedom rider and has first person experiences. He spoke with some moving material but unfortunately lost the audience about a minute in and did his entire keynote speech rather than the edited down version we had discussed. Having video of Martin Luther King Jr is a vital part of the program. We skipped one of these segments for time however. The John Muir grade school chorus, directed by Emy Phelps did a good job. Sweet children singing with adults providing backup is always a hit. Abdi Aziz Guled, Ashland Middle School counselor, AHS coach, did short remarks. This was an example of a speaker who had the right length and tone. The OSF Chorus sang "Shed a Little Light". This group was hard to put together and not the same as the organic gospel group from last year. Still it was great music and it was sung well and with heart. Zoe Heald did a poem by Vanessa Hiday about being Jewish. She didn't credit the author at first but luckily I recognized the poem. Nick Morales, a Latino high school student, also did short remarks which were the right length and hit the right note with the audience. Rabbi David Zaslow sang a song. An audience member yelled something about Palestine during this performance that only a few audience members noticed. You can't notice it in the video. Calysta Rupert-Anderson sang "Feeling Good". She did a nice job but the program is overfull. We should have cut this number.

The biggest numbers were the closing piece Buckworld One and SOU student's in "Invitation to Action". During planning a committee member mentioned being happy that racism was over. This caused the committee members of color to react in laughter. We then had a frank conversation about acts of racism that take place in the Rogue



Valley on an everyday basis. I was surprised that any of this was news. I forgot how privilege can blind you to things. We decided as a group to create a piece addressing this issue. We sent an email to community members soliciting their personal stories about times they experiences racial bias.

We received many responses from within the company and around the company. I edited the pieces together with a quote from Martin Luther King and text from an Obama speech. I rehearsed the piece with students from SOU and cast it against gender and ethnicity. The audience was extremely engaged. Lots of people were leaning forward in their seats. A few people looked challenged. Afterward we received a lot of positive feedback from community and

colloques of color as well as white. Not that we were expecting explicit negative feedback but the amount of unsolicited positive feedback told us it really struck a chord.

Buckworld One performed an excerpt of their piece that travels from slavery to Martin Luther King. It's very moving and virtuosic in places. The young performers were so gracious with the audience members who treated them a little like a boy band. I was impressed with their professionalism. It was a great opportunity for community engagement just hanging out in Medford and in Ashland. It's too bad we don't blog. This would be a great way to capture the hourly experiences. I bet they wouldn't mind if we bring them back or want to book another group like this we will need more substantial funding. We will need to get some additional sponsors for this event if we want to bring performers or speakers from out of the state in the future.

The final debrief was a great time full of members from both committees, pizza, snacks, and wine. People had very positive feelings about the collaboration and promised to keep in touch.

Invitation to community members to contribute to “Invitation to Action”

This year's Martin Luther King Day celebration committee would like to recognize the ways that racism still affects our community by addressing it through art. We're putting together a text based on your input. Please forward this to your friends of color who live here in the Rogue Valley.

Please reply to these prompts in a few words or 1-3 sentences. Feel free to be as creative and honest as you want. In the final piece your participation will be anonymous. The piece is entitled “Invitation to Action”.

I am a _____ from _____.
-short description of racial bias incident that happened to you locally
I felt _____ but _____
Should we _____?

ex. I am a black woman from Montana, but I live here now. A few weeks ago a very nice woman mistook me for a different black person who I don't look anything like. I felt salty at first but she was giving me or the other woman a compliment so I guess I just feel confused now. Should we all get nametags?

Press Release, 2 pages

01-06-09

Contacts:

Press release info - Freda Casillas, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, 482-2111 x242

Ashland celebration – Claudia Alick, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, 482-2111 x435 or

Michelle Zundel 482-1611 x173

Medford celebration – Connie Saldana 890-2237 or Milo Salgado 941-5753

Rogue Valley celebrates Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday in Medford and Ashland.

Medford and Ashland celebrations honor Dr. King by collaborating.

To celebrate the true spirit of community, the Medford and Ashland MLK Task Forces--including the Oregon Shakespeare Festival & the Multicultural Association of Southern Oregon--are collaborating in their planning. The goal is to bridge together the two communities through shared resources and support.

Be a Freedom Rider!!

Catch the Freedom Bus to the Medford event from Ashland on Sunday, boarding at 1:15 p.m. in front of the Ashland Safeway. Space is limited. Arrive early. The bus ride is roundtrip and free.

Both celebrations will feature;

Buckworld One a hip-hop theatre group that fuses krump dancing and poetry. Buckworld One performed for Oregon Shakespeare Festival Green Show this past summer to overflowing crowds.

Nick Morales, speaking on his experiences as a Latino student

John Dolan – Freedom Rider, speaking

Another collaboration feature is a performance by Claudia Alick, associate producer community, Oregon Shakespeare Festival and producer of the Ashland MLK celebration who will be performing “street poetry” at the Medford celebration on Sunday.

MEDFORD TO CELEBRATE 7TH ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

Sunday, January 18th, 2:00-4:00pm, South Medford High School Auditorium

The 2009 tribute to the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. will be held on Sunday, January 18, 2009 at South Medford High School Auditorium, 815 Oakdale. This commemoration of an inspirational man and message brings a mix of speakers, music, dance and art to celebrate the principles of peace and equal rights. The event also serves as a formal reminder of the necessity for continuing education and promotion of--not just tolerance--but appreciation for people who are different. Together we make a strong and resilient community.

The 2009 commemoration will feature Buckworld One –hip hop theatre, Buddhist Lamas, and Ballet Folklorico, as well as performers and speakers from other backgrounds. The theme chosen for this year's event will be "Freedom Riders"

Rogue Valley celebrates Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday in Medford and Ashland- Pg2

with John Dolan, the keynote speaker and former Freedom Rider, speaking about his involvement with the Freedom Rider movement and the current relevancy of their message of equal rights, justice and peace.

This year the Medford Martin Luther King Task Force will present its first annual "I Have a Dream" Award to a West Medford neighborhood for their positive community response by acting with compassion, leadership and the spirit of community healing to the hate crimes that took place in May 2008. The award was established to acknowledge the example set by this specific group but the award will become a tradition for future Medford MLK celebrations.

Following the program the audience is invited to meet the speakers and performers and enjoy light refreshments in the cafeteria.

Sponsors of the Medford celebration include, Muchas Gracias Mexican Restaurant, West Main, Harry and David, Rogue Community College, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and the Multicultural Association of Southern Oregon.

The program is free to the public. The Medford MLK Task Force invites each person attending the event to donate one can of food at the door. The Task Force will give the canned food donations to Access Food Bank.

ASHLAND TO CELEBRATE 21st ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY CELEBRATION

Monday, January 19, 12:00 - 1:30pm, Historic Ashland Armory

The 21st annual Ashland Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday celebration is scheduled for 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m. Monday, January 19 at the Historic Ashland Armory in downtown Ashland.

The theme of this year's event is: Transformational Leadership, the Life and Legacy of Martin Luther King. Dr. King's leadership inspired a transformation in society toward greater dignity, compassion and justice for all. Considering our world today and the election of Barack Obama, we have an opportunity to be a part of further transformation, fulfilling Dr. King's dream for the world.

This year's keynote speaker Rikirby Hinds brings with him, reknowned KRUMP dancers BuckWorld One. Keeping with the tradition of the community celebration, students from the Ashland School District SOU, OSF actors and diverse community groups will contribute songs, dances and dramatic performances.

Come celebrate as a community! Seating is always limited and available on a first come basis. The doors will open at 11:30 a.m. All ages are welcome and parents are urged to stay with their children during the event. Each year the event reaches standing room only by 12 noon. We are pleased to announce that there will be a simulcast of the event at Carpenter Hall at the corner of Pioneer and Hargadine.

Produced by a group of community volunteers and sponsored by the Ashland School District, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the City of Ashland, Jefferson Public Radio and Southern Oregon University, the event is free and open to the public. People are encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item to donate to Rogue Valley food banks. Sign language interpreters will provide interpretation.

Online archival materials

Video of whole show

<http://www.vimeo.com/2890141>

<http://www.dailytidings.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090115/ENTERTAIN/901150324>

<http://www.dailytidings.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090116/NEWS02/901160313/-1/NEWS>

<http://www.mailtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090116/TEMPO/901160304>

Ashland Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration

Monday, January 19, 2009

Noon to 1:30 pm • Historic Ashland Armory

FREE TO THE PUBLIC

Please bring a non-perishable food donation

Support Fellow OSF Participants and Volunteers

Including Performances By:

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival Chorus

Previous Green Show Guest Artists *Buckworld One*

~*~

FYI: Arrive early, space fills quickly

Dagoba Chocolates, NicaNelly and Eco teas have generously donated
free hot drinks that will be served to those waiting in line.

For those unable to get into the Armory there will be a second venue with live streaming
of the performance thanks to Equilibrium Television- <http://Eq.Tv>

Oregon Stage Works 191 A St

Join us afterwards for the march to the plaza to hear Martin Luther
King's "I Have a Dream"



2009 Ashland MLK Day Talent Line-up

NAME	PIECE	GENRE	LENGTH	APPROX TIME
Adebisi Adeleke	African Talking Drum	music	5 min	12:00— (this might start earlier)
VIDEO	Obama clips and “Yes We Can” by the Black Eyed Peas	video	1 min 15 sec	
Opening Remarks			3-5 min	
John Dolan	freedom rider	speaker	5 min	
VIDEO	MLK		1 min 37 sec	
John Muir grade school chorus	Directed by Emy Phelps	Song and poetry	5 min	12:15
Abdi Aziz Guled	Ashland Middle School counselor, AHS coach	Speaking	5 min	
VIDEO	MLK		2 min 5 sec	
OSF Chorus	Shed a Little Light	singing	5 min	
Zoe Heald		Poetry	5 min	12:30
Nick Morales	Latino high school student	Speaker	5 min	
Rabbi David Zaslow		Storytelling and song	6 min	
VIDEO	MLK		0 min 58 sec	
SOU student groups	Invitation to action	Spoken word piece	7 min	12:45
Calysta Rupert-Anderson	“Feeling Good”	singing	5 min	
Professor Rickerby Hinds	Keynote Speaker		10 min	1:00
BuckWorld One			10 min	
Final Remarks				
March to the Plaza				1:30

Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Celebration



Live the Dream
Celebrate Together

Rickerby "Kerby" Hinds, BuckWorld One, John Dolan, Adebisi Adeleke, Ashland and Medford School District Students, Black Student Union at SOU, Shakespeare Festival Company Members, Queer Resource Center, Community Leaders and Master of Ceremonies DL Richardson

Monday, January 19, 2009

Noon to 1:30 pm • Historic Ashland Armory

FREE TO THE PUBLIC

Please bring a non-perishable food donation

Sign Language Interpreters provided

Medford Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration

Sunday, January 18, 2009 2:00-4:00

South Medford High School Auditorium 815 S. Oakdale, Medford

(Catch the Freedom Bus to the Medford event from Ashland on Sunday, boarding at 1:15 p.m. in front of Safeway. Space is limited. Arrive early)

Sponsored by Ashland School District, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Southern Oregon University, Jefferson Public Radio, City of Ashland

"And so we shall have to do more than register and more than vote; we shall have to create leaders who embody virtues we can respect, who have moral and ethical principles we can applaud with enthusiasm." —Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration!!!!
With Keynote Speaker &
Freedom Rider John Dolan

Sunday, January 18, 2009
2:00-4:00 p.m.
South Medford High School Auditorium
815 S. Oakdale, Medford
Free Admission

Also Presenting:
Dancing by Ballet Folklórico Ritmo Alegre
Prayer Drumming by Nick Hall
Hip Hop Theater,
Krump Dancing, and Poetry by Buckworld One
Street Poetry by Claudia Alick,
Buddhist Lamas from Tibetan Meditation Center

"Get on the Bus!!!"
Join the "Freedom Ride!"
A Freedom Bus to the Medford event will leave from the Ashland Safeway (585 Siskiyou
Blvd) at 1:15pm
Space is limited!!!! Come early!!!!



In 1961 a group of 13 mixed-race civil rights activists traveling on Greyhound and Trailways buses set out for Deep South to challenge Jim Crow laws and exact change with a non-violent campaign. They were often received with hostility and brutality. Their efforts inspired other Freedom Riders and transformed the civil rights movement.

At a depot in Jackson, Mississippi the Freedom Riders attempted to use the "white-only" facilities. They were immediately arrested and jailed. "...the Freedom Riders were transferred to the infamous Parchman Penitentiary...Their abusive treatment included placement in the Maximum Security Unit (Death Row), issuance of only underwear, no exercise, no mail, and, when Freedom Riders refused to stop singing Freedom Songs, they took away mattresses, sheets and toothbrushes..."

Leading us in song on the bus will be
Kent Heyward (Sax) &
Richard Meyer (Base)
from "Living on Dreams".

Riding on bus from Ashland to Medford will be from musical group "Living on Dreams" sax player Kent Heyward and base player Richard Meyer. They will lead the group in songs such as ***O Happy Day.***



Info on Buckworld One;

<http://www.blackvoicenews.com/content/view/41662/16/>

UCR Hosts Hip Hop Theatre - Buck World One as Part of King Celebration

Friday, 11 January 2008

RIVERSIDE

Local "krump dancers" and poets deliver unique and personal stories through words and movement as part of a performance sponsored by African Student Programs.

UC Riverside's African Student Programs (ASP), The Black Voice News and The Black Voice Foundation, will host the Hip Hop Theatre production Buck World One as part of its celebration of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, Sunday, Jan. 20 at 2:30 p.m. at University Theatre. Buck World One fuses dance, spoken word and interactive video projections in telling the story of the human situation.

Buck World One was developed through the CaliFest Theatre Workshop under the guidance of playwright and UCR professor of theater Rickerby Hinds, who happened onto inner-city youths participating in this new hip hop dance style at a local church. When Hinds witnessed the intensity, passion and athleticism of the dance he also saw an opportunity for good theater.

"Krump or Buck is a form of expression often related to praise dancing that explores the human situation and the lives of young people in the Inland Empire," Hinds said. "It addresses themes such as violence in the community, police brutality and the civil-rights movement."

This unique dance form provides an outlet for youth who face harsh realities of violence and other challenges in their communities. Young people with no formal dance training gather in small, hot, cramped rooms, church fellowship halls, playgrounds, parking lots or any neutral space each week throughout Southern California to participate in "krump battles" in which they use dance moves instead of bullets.

"With no youth theatre company and few performance spaces available, these weekly gatherings are, in many cases, the only opportunity for these young people to express themselves creatively," Hinds said.

With Buck World One, Hinds challenges conventional notions of the stage through the use of popular culture by including elements of hip hop.



Info about Rickerby Hinds director of Buckworld One;

Info from <http://www.usperformingarts.com/people.php?id=32>

Rickerby Hinds is a leading national authority in Hip Hop Theater, and one of the most influential individuals to come into the theater in this generation. A theater professor at UC Riverside, Rickerby is known for the creative development of this emerging acting performance style. His 1989 play, Daze to Come, changed the dramatic arts forever.

Info from <http://theatre.ucr.edu/people/faculty/hinds/>

Rickerby Hinds

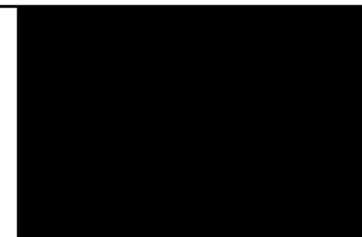
Associate Professor

Playwriting

B.A., UC Riverside

M.F.A., UC Los Angeles

Professor Hinds was twice awarded the UCLA/Audrey Skirball-Kenis (ASK) Award for best play. His visionary creations span the gamut of human emotions and experiences. *Blackballin'*, which received a reading at London's Royal Court Theatre, examines the issue of race and history in American sports and society. The semi-autobiographical *Birthmark* (commissioned by Showtime to be adapted into a screenplay) explores the social and cultural conflicts of a Spanish-speaking immigrant of African-descent forced to choose between the limiting racial categories offered within American society. In *One Size Fits All*, Hinds tackles the global issue of the exploitation of children by tracing the life of an athletic sneaker from its creation in an Indonesian sweatshop, to the ghettos of America, to the sugar cane fields of the Dominican Republic, and finally to the feet of a child soldier in Eastern Europe, and his *Keep Hedz Ringin'*, his Hip Hop Opera adaptation of Richard Wagner's Ring Cycle explores the effects of greed.



**A. Tribute to
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Presenters:

Prayer and Drumming
Nick Hall

Master of Ceremonies
Carson Bench

Proclamation
Mayor Gary Wheeler

Tibetan Meditation Center
Buddhist Lamas

Street Poetry
Claudia Alick,
Oregon Shakespeare Festival

Skit
Fun Art Club of UNETE

Student Essay
Nick Morales

Gospel Music
Jeff Nicholson

Keynote Speaker, Freedom Rider
John Luther Dolan

**Hip Hop Theater,
Krump Dancing, and Poetry**
Buckworld One

"I Have a Dream" Award
Katherine Tillotson

Mexican Dancing
Ballet Folklórico Ritmo Alegre

"Yes we have...!"
Dennis Franklin

Rogue Valley Peace Choir

Visit with the program participants
and performers and enjoy
refreshments in the cafeteria
Music provided by Kent and Richard of
Living on Dreams and Dennis Franklin

Invitation to Action

Compiled by Claudia Alick (2009)

Formatted for 8 Voices but can be performed by groups up to 10

The following text contains a mixture of quotes from Barack Obama, Martin Luther King Jr., and first person testimonies from Ashland residents in an effort to recognize the ways that racism still affects our community by addressing it through art.

Voice 1: There is not a liberal America and a conservative America –

All: There is the United States of America.

Voice 2: There is not a black America

Voice 3: and a white America

Voice 4: and Latino America

Voice 5: and Asian America –

All: there's the United States of America.

Voice 6: We are one people;

Voice 7: we are one nation;

Voice 8: and together,

All: we will begin the next great chapter in America's story.

Voice 1: I am a white man married to an Asian woman. We experience racial bias frequently living here. I feel like people here mean well, but that they don't Get It when they ask what nationality my wife is... Do you care what MY nationality is? Do I care what yours is? Do you ask a black person what country they are from? Do you ask what country a Latino person is from? I don't get it...Why don't you care where My Ancestors are from? Just because they are obviously white doesn't guarantee that they are boring...

Voice 8: I am a mother of two beautiful bi-racial children, from Ashland. I was at Safeway with both of my children, when a couple (complete strangers) walking down the aisle started pointing at my children saying "Oh aren't they cute" and circling around them like they were circus animals. I felt annoyed and embarrassed, but just chose to ignore them, until the man asked me "Where did you get them?" I was tempted to answer sarcastically, but chose to bite my tongue since the children were listening. Instead I answered with all honesty "Oh, they're mine".

Voice 2: Then there was the waitress (or should I say waitresses) at "Sherri's". On more than one occasion we were simply not served. The first time there was a family across the aisle from us with a pretty little blond baby. The waitress went out of her way to serve them and would praise the beauty of this little girl (especially her hair) and then turn and glare at us, and not serve us. It was blatant.

Voice 3 and 7: Nothing in all the world is more dangerous

Voice 4 and 6: than sincere ignorance

Voice 2: and conscientious stupidity.

Voice 1 and 6: Never succumb to the temptation of bitterness.

Voice 4: Stick with love.

Voice 3: Hate is too great a burden to bear.

Voice 5: I am an Asian-American woman who grew up in Oregon. The other day, someone was sharing about an unpleasant experience they had with a "Mexican." I felt sorry for them but was also really bothered they used race to illustrate how bad they believed the person to be. If the person had been Caucasian would they have pointed out the fact she was "white"? If I had said something would they have brushed it off with the usual "you're too sensitive about race"?

Voice 3: I am a black woman who moved here recently. A few weeks ago a very nice woman mistook me for a different black person who I don't look anything like. I'm a little shorter and darker. She's lighter and also over ten years younger than me! But we were the only two black women at the event so no wonder she got mixed up. I felt salty at first but she was giving me or the other woman a compliment so I guess I just feel confused now.

Voice 5: I am a Philippina-American. In the last year I have had four people ask whether I was of Native Alaskan, Hawaiian, Chinese, or Native American decent. I felt flattered by their intrigue but put off by their use of words on first contact. Should guessing my ethnicity be a sport or game?

Voice 4: I am an Asian woman from Oakland. A man came to buy tickets to our plays, but didn't want to see any "blacks" in them. He didn't use the word "blacks". I felt angry and ashamed but remained silent. He didn't know I was raised by a black family. Should we all keep our mouths shut?

All: Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

(over lapping voices)

Voice 1: I love my community

Voice 4: sometimes it's stressful

Voice 5: I can't be myself

Voice 2: Most of the time I feel comfortable here

Voice 3: They stopped pulling me over for no reason after about a year

Voice 5: I don't plan on moving ever

Voice 6: I'm probably going to leave in the next year

Voice 1: I'm only going to school here

Voice 2: they followed my friends in the stores

I'm sure it's not personal

Voice 3: The way they portrayed my race made me cry

I know they didn't mean it that way

Voice 4: I'm just tired of having to explain all the time

Voice 6: But what we know -- what we have seen - is that America can change. That is the true genius of this nation. What we have already achieved gives us hope - the audacity to hope - for what we can and must achieve tomorrow.

All: "We the people, in order to form amore perfect union."

Voice 1: we perfect our union by understanding that we may have different stories,

Voice 2 and 3: but we hold common hopes;

Voice 4: that we may not look the same

Voice 5 and 6: and we may not have come from the same place,

Voice 1: but we all want to move in the same direction –

Voice 2 and 3: towards a better future

All: Change...

Voice 4: ...does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle.

All: Change...

Voice 5: ...will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time.

Voice 6: We are the ones we've been waiting for.

All: We are the change that we seek.