



News release

January 20, 2014

Media contact: Lee Colony 262.564.2512

262.359.0798 (cell)

**Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration keynote speaker:
Education is the great equalizer**

America needs to renew its commitment to education to keep the dream and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. alive and well today, King speech re-enactor and motivational speaker Gregg Riley told audience members at Gateway Technical College on Monday, January 20.

Riley opened Gateway's 20th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration by re-enacting King's "I have a dream" speech to a packed crowd at the Madrigrano Auditorium on the college's Kenosha Campus. He later delivered his keynote speech, focused on how education provides the opportunities for minorities to succeed – and remains an important key to fulfilling King's dream of equality.

"We have to keep our eyes on the prize – and the prize is quality education," said Riley. "Education is the great equalizer."

Several other speakers echoed Riley's thoughts, including Gateway student and Kenosha-area radio and television host Troy McDonald. He said in many ways, America has moved forward to make possible King's dream of equality – but youth must continue to keep his legacy alive today. "Our mission is to honor that struggle and continue to move forward," he said.

Following the noon celebration, Gateway also hosted an education summit, to discuss the status of Southeastern Wisconsin educational programs and opportunities focused on minority student success. Education leaders and minority education experts from K12 districts and colleges across Gateways' three-county district participated in the summit.

Several of those present pointed to mentoring and other programs that already were making inroads into student success. Others mentioned that the very real possibility exists that the value of education may be viewed as less by today's youth, and needs to be taken into consideration when developing programs. This may mean shifting the way educators interact with students and parents. All said this type of collaboration and interaction to share best practices is important for education in Southeastern Wisconsin and should continue.

The event was video recorded and a white paper report will be created, sharing steps to be taken to increase minority student engagement and achievement.

Gateway Technical College collaborates with communities in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties to ensure economic growth and viability by providing education, training, leadership and technological resources to meet the changing needs of students, employers and communities.

XXX