



News release

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**Dr. King keynote speaker:
We have a responsibility to dream big – for future generations**

Everyone has the ability to forge a dream of hope for future generations – and has the responsibility to make sure that happens, said Thelma Sias, keynote speaker for Gateway Technical College’s 22nd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebration on Monday.

The theme for this year is Personal Responsibility: Stand Up!

“We all have a responsibility to think big, dream big and understand the power of the words of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. when he said ‘I have a dream,’” Sias told a packed a Madrigrano Auditorium at the college’s Conference Center on its Kenosha Campus.

“He said ‘I have a dream.’ The question today, we must ask, is what is our dream about this community and this nation? What is our dream about a community and friends and family? What is our dream for tomorrow? And, where is our courage, to take on the responsibility to stand up and speak out to make sure they are not just hidden dreams, but reality.”

Sias told the crowd at the annual event that they have the ability to put new meaning into King’s words and work.

“We have the capacity to put new language to the old adage ‘I am my brother’s keeper,’” she said. “We are our brother’s keeper, and our sister’s keeper, but most importantly, we are the keeper of hope for future generations.

“We can’t sit around and say ‘when is somebody else going to do it?’ What are we going to do to make sure that future generations have greater opportunities than us?”

Sias, vice president – local affairs for Wisconsin Energy Corporation Energy Group, is responsible for building and enhancing long-term relationships with community leaders and local government to garner support and approval for critical corporate initiatives. Sias directs activities to monitor community concerns and negotiate with local governments on policies that impact company operations.

Humanitarians honored

At the ceremony, Gateway also honored this year’s Humanitarians, Don Mueller, Cheryl Mueller and Alexis Aiello.

Among other work, Don and Cheryl Mueller, of Racine, have spearheaded a resurgence of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Racine and engage in a prison ministry. Their award nominator says the Muellers “have spent a lifetime of service to those in need.”

Alexis Aiello, Racine, is a fourth-grader in the Racine Unified School District. She is involved in Girl Scouts and is a peer mentor at her school. Aiello’s award nominator says she “embodies the spirit and philosophy of Dr. Martin Luther King because she looks at people’s hearts and nothing else. And even

when those whose hearts are sometimes unkind – she sees them as a person even more in need of love!”

These individuals are recognized for their humanitarian contributions to society in his or her school, business or profession, as well as their dedication to volunteerism or philanthropic life’s work.

A video of their stories can be found at: <https://goo.gl/4pknUd>

**Leaders focus on literacy issues
at educational summit**

The celebration concluded with the third annual education summit, which focused on literacy in Southeastern Wisconsin.

The summit outlined the many different successes and barriers area groups have in providing literacy services to the residents of Racine, Kenosha and Walworth counties. Literacy remains an important issue for many of the groups, and they were pleased to learn more about the resources available to better refer to residents in need.

This is the third year Gateway has held an educational summit in conjunction with its Dr. King celebration.

The summit will act as a catalyst to continue bringing leaders in Southeastern Wisconsin together in the future to help develop and strengthen literacy efforts.

For further questions about the celebration, please contact Zina Haywood at (262) 564-3104.

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.