

Name: Sabrina Guerra

Grade: 5

School: Virtual ACCESS Academy

4th Congressional District

Agents of Change and a March Toward a New World

Martin Luther King Jr. aspired to bring peace and equality to oppressed people. I share this dream. I am of a marginalized group fighting for our right to be heard, the right to define ourselves, and the right to belong. I am an autistic non-speaker and I've been subjected to mistreatment and segregation because of prejudice and ignorance. Like MLK Jr., I have an inextinguishable flame for justice.

Ableism is a damaging force in society, destroying souls and sowing division. Ableism looms over America's education system, saturates our medical institutions, and shrouds our media. In my lived experience ableism usurped my right to an equal education. MLK Jr. made history by a tireless campaign toward progress. He refused his challengers' insistence that he and his people patiently wait for justice. As was right and bold then, our revolution is now. Disabled voices must be amplified over those who have no authority to speak for us, define us, nor deny us access.

On countless occasions my mind has sailed to feats of unyielding courage of Martin Luther King Jr. and his peers. Many stinging, similar offenses and parallel dreams tie my aspirations to their journeys and leadership. My advocacy is a fire that burns within my damaged yet proud and beautiful soul.