

Name: Sabrina Lam

School: Manchester High School

Grade: 10

Congressional District: 1

On March 7, 1965, 55 years ago, 525 civil rights marchers headed east out of Selma, Alabama on U.S Route 80. The hundreds of demonstrators were promoting black voter registration commemorating the death of Jimmie Lee Jackson, a civil rights activist who was brutally killed during a peaceful voting rights march. The marchers only made it to the Edmund Pettus Bridge six blocks away until state troopers attacked them with billy clubs and tear gas. This day is forever known as 'Bloody Sunday'.

In the aftermath of Bloody Sunday, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. presented a sermon in Selma, Alabama the next day on March 8, 1965. During his speech, he uttered the words, "Deep down in our non-violent creed is the conviction, there are some things so dear, some things so precious, some things so eternally true, that they're worth dying for". Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was an American Christian minister and activist who became the most significant leader of the Civil Rights Movement, until his assassination in 1968. Although the movement ended in the 1960s, Dr. King's words are still important today and will continue to be, as society keeps progressing in his direction of racial equality.

Since then, society has moved forward incredibly. Children of all different colors are able to learn in the same classrooms and public places aren't segregated into a "blacks" and "whites" section. While these laws have been abolished for more than 50 years now, marginalization and discrimination still exist. I witness it every day in the cliques of my high school whose lunch tables are subtly grouped by race. I also see it where it's more obvious in the news reports of police brutality, and the corrupt justice system where white men receive no jail time while black men will be sentenced years for the same crime.

Bloody Sunday was only one of the many incidents where people were beaten and killed for peacefully fighting for their rights. Countless people suffered during this movement including Dr. King. During his time as the leader of the Civil Rights Movement, he faced incessant hatred and violence, spent jail time, and gravely risked his life. Dr. King didn't let fear stop him and with his courage and selflessness, he was able to remarkably change the world for the better. As a youth, I determine the future, and with this power, I want to always remind myself to remember Dr. King's words on March 8, 1965. I want to always find the courage to stand up for what's right to one day reach a society where my children won't see the slightest bit of segregation in the cafeteria, where news reports of police brutality finally stop, and where racial disparities in federal sentencing no longer exist. I know that I can't abolish all of these things on my own, but I can promise to do what I can to help make sure that one day, discrimination will only exist in history books.