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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is one of history's most inspiring figures because of his incredible dedication to equality and justice, and his legacy is impacting the choices I am now making. Dr. King wasn't just a civil rights leader, he was also a symbol of hope and change. What made him special was his ability to lead through nonviolence and inspire millions of people with the power of words alone. His "I Have a Dream" speech is still one of the most famous speeches ever and reminds us that a better future is possible.

Dr. King's work was informed by his belief that peaceful protests were the best way to bring about change. He led major events like the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the March on Washington, where he called for an end to racism and segregation. His work helped lead to historic changes, like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. For his efforts, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. Even though he faced threats and violence, Dr. King never gave up his quest for a better America and a better world.

I think that Dr. King's dream is partly a reality today, but I am realizing that there is still more to be done. Movements and protests in recent years, like Black Lives Matter, remind us that Dr. King's vision isn't yet fully realized. There have been real successes. Segregation is illegal, and laws protect equal voting rights. Schools, workplaces, and leadership roles are more diverse, and we've had a Black president, Barack Obama. However, racism still exists in many forms. There is police brutality, hate crimes and racial profiling, and health and economic inequalities remain widespread.

Food insecurity, for example, is one area where communities of color are hit hardest today, and Connecticut has a surprisingly high rate of food insecurity. Inspired by Dr. King's call to serve and lift each other up, I am taking on a new volunteer project with a food bank. I am currently a Scout with Troop 33, and for my Eagle rank project I have chosen an initiative with the Midwest Food Bank New England, which is based in Manchester. I am drafting a plan to refurbish the organization's food donation area and will see the project through to completion this year. Food banks have local, as well as national, reach, and the services they provide play a vital role in lifting people out of poverty.

This project is one way that I can make a difference, but it is just a first step. Looking ahead, I am interested in exploring careers that make positive social impacts. Dr. King's words remind us that even when progress feels slow, every action we take to promote justice brings us closer to a better world. As Dr. King said at the Washington National Cathedral in 1968: "We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."