

MLK DREAM WEEKEND

ALL. TOGETHER. NOW.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – January 3, 2013

Nika White
Director of Marketing
MLK Dream Weekend
nwhite@greenvillechamber.org
864-414-6925

8th Annual MLK Dream Weekend Commits to Take Action on Dr. King's Dream

GREENVILLE, S.C. – MLK Dream Weekend is proud to announce the 2013 Diversity Banquet speaker is Nikki Giovanni, a world-renowned poet, writer, commentator, activist, and educator. Over the past 30 years, her outspokenness in her writing and lectures, has turned the eyes of the world upon her. One of the most widely read American poets, she prides herself on being "a Black American, a daughter, a mother, a professor of English." Giovanni remains as determined and committed as ever to the fight for civil rights and equality. Always insisting on presenting the truth as she sees it, she has maintained a prominent place, as a strong voice of the black community. Her focus is on the individual, specifically, on the power one has to make a difference in oneself, and thus, in the lives of others.

Many of Giovanni's books have received honors and awards. Her autobiography, *Gemini*, was a finalist for the National Book Award; *Love Poems*, *Blues: For All the Changes*, *Quilting the Black-Eyed Pea*, *Acolytes*, and *Hip Hop Speaks to Children: A Celebration of Poetry with a Beat* were all honored with NAACP Image Awards. *Blues: For All the Changes* reached number four on the *Los Angeles Times* Bestseller list, a rare achievement for a book of poems. Most recently, her children's picture book *Rosa*, about the civil rights legend Rosa Parks, became a Caldecott Honors Book, and Bryan Collier, the illustrator, was given the Coretta Scott King award for Best Illustration. *Rosa* also reached number three on *The New York Times* Bestseller list. Shortly after its release, *Bicycles: Love Poems* reached number one on Amazon.com for Poetry.

Giovanni's spoken word recordings have also achieved widespread recognition and honors. Her album *Truth Is On Its Way*, on which she reads her poetry against a background of gospel music, was a top 100 album and received the award for Best Spoken Word Album given by the National Association of Radio and Television Announcers. And her *Nikki Giovanni Poetry Collection*, on which she reads and talks about her poetry, was one of five finalists for a Grammy Award.

The Diversity Banquet kicks off each year's MLK Dream Weekend's events with a night of dining, entertainment, awards and recognitions, culminating with an inspiring keynote address. Hundreds of business leaders and organizations attend this event to pay honor to Martin Luther King, Jr., and to celebrate diversity in our community. This year 12 scholarships, totaling \$110,000, will be awarded during the Diversity Banquet, once again showing the commitment to young dreamers in the Upstate.

MLK Dream Weekend's 2013 Diversity Banquet will be held on Thursday, January 17th, at 7 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency. This evening is inspirational for all who attend, and youth groups, colleges, churches, and organizations are encouraged to show their support by purchasing a table. Tickets are \$60 individually and \$550 for a table of 10. They are available online at www.mlkdreamweekend.com or at the following locations:

- * Valley Brook Outreach Baptist Church
- * BJ's Music
- * Bethlehem Baptist Church
- * Greenville County Human Relations Commission

"We are overwhelmed by the support and dedication from the Upstate community to continue to keep Dr. King's memory and dream alive. This year we were able to offer more scholarships, enabling students to live out their dream, and that's what this weekend is all about." Pastor Curtis Johnson, Chairman of Executive Board/Executive Committee.

The Prayer Vigil will be held at Falls Park, Friday, January 11th at 7 p.m. The weekend kicks off with the Community Day of Service, taking place January 19th from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at various project sites throughout Greenville. And concludes on January 21st, with the Dreams In Action Day, a free event open to the public and held at Greenville High School from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. This event will feature "One Voice" with JDew, presented by MICHELIN. "One Voice" is an exceptional narrative highlighting orations from some of America's most influential black leaders. "One Voice" is a fascinating journey through the black American experience, by virtue of eight powerful and influential voices spanning from the 1820s to present day including: Martin Luther King, Jr., Muhammad Ali, Bill Cosby, and Barack Obama.

MLK Dream Weekend is an organization of civic and business leaders committed to the cause of Dr. King and the citizens of Greenville County. Initiated in 2006 to establish an annual community-wide celebration of the MLK Holiday for the Greenville, South Carolina area, MLK Dream Weekend is based on Dr. King's dreams of diversity with equality and peace. For more information, please visit www.mlkdreamweekend.com.

###