

# Prayer vigil kicks off MLK Dream Weekend

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**Prayer vigil kicks off MLK events:** A prayer vigil was held Friday evening to kick off MLK events.

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**People gather for the MLK Liberty Bridge unity walk and prayer vigil at Falls Park in Greenville. / PATRICK COLLARD/Staff**

Speakers urged the attendees at Friday night's "prayer vigil" at Falls Park in downtown Greenville kicking off the seventh annual MLK Dream Weekend to allow themselves to "dream."

"Thank God for the dreamers," said Pastor Genaro Marin, who is with the Presbyterian Latino Ministry. "Lord we live in a world of war and only you can heal it."

Marin also gave a similar prayer in Spanish to the onlookers, who varied in race, age and background.

Fountain Inn Mayor Gary Long, speaking for local lawmakers, said, "We each have been elected for some purpose. We need to find it."

Speakers also said, in various ways, that King would be honored if each person opened his or her heart and tried to understand the next person.

Father Patrick Tuttle, of St. Anthony Padua Catholic Church, said he was asked to give a "prayer for the assimilation of returning troops."

"Help our troops value life again," he said during the 30-minute ceremony. "Let the evil of war be eradicated."

MLK DreamWeekend co-chairs and fellow pastors Curtis L. Johnson and Phillip Baldwin led the kickoff.

“We believe in the power of prayer, which can heal,” Johnson said.

“This brief program is designed to impact our community through a strong demonstration of unity as we focus ... on the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.,” spokeswoman Nika White said prior to the event.

Next Friday, MLK Dream Weekend will begin with “a diversity banquet” at the TD Convention Center off Pleasantburg Drive. The keynoter will be journalist/CNN analyst Roland Martin.

A member of the National Association of Black Journalists, he also contributes to the Tom Joyner Morning Show heard weekdays on WJMZ FM-107.3.

The night’s entertainment will be provided by the “Groove Planet with Whitney Walters,” organizers said.

White said organizers are expected to present about 11 scholarships.

Individual tickets are \$60 and \$550 for a table for 10.

On Saturday, Jan. 14, organizers will coordinate with Hands On Greenville, a volunteer group, for a day of “community service.” Between the hours of 10 a.m. and noon, it will involve “various projects” around Greenville County.

On Monday, Jan. 16, MLK’s official birthday nationally, “Dreams in Action” are planned from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. at Greenville High school, according to organizers.

For additional details, go to [www.mlkdreamweekend.com](http://www.mlkdreamweekend.com) or (864) 990-1060.

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20120106/NEWS/301050051/Prayer-vigil-kicks-off-MLK-Dream-Weekend>