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Helping Alaskans with Differing Abilities Experience Hope Since 1968

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Dear Friends,

This past year has provided us with all too many moments of helplessness. The events of the last week have given us all pause. The flow of opinions and commentaries is nearly inescapable as shock, anger, and blame circulate the globe.

In the wake of the events of the last week I am drawn to the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

Dr. King’s words compel me to ask two questions: “Where do I stand at this time of darkness for our country?” And, “What can I do, as an individual, to make a difference?” The answer I reached is simple in statement, profound in action – love, more.

I was taught you can’t be truly loving without being principled and you can’t be truly principled without being loving. Two facets of the same action. Integrity and compassion, courage and forgiveness are not opposing qualities, but when acted upon lead to acts of enhanced love and accountability.

Each of us, each day, have opportunities to improve the spaces we move in. We can choose to forgive rather than hate, share joy rather than fatigue, listen with open hearts rather than judge, collaborate rather than obstruct, express humility rather than arrogance, be generous rather than withhold.

Dr. King’s example is honored when we stand with him and vow with action to love more. It starts with daily interactions with family and friends, broadens to our communications with colleagues and community members, and reaches out as we interact as citizens of our country and the global community.

Dr. King said, “I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant.”

As we move closer to the celebration of Dr. King’s life and legacy of leadership, his eloquent and compelling messages of love, forgiveness, and courage give us all an anchor of hope, if we follow his example with action. In these times of challenge and controversy, his life’s work is truly honored if love and principle guide our daily words and actions.

I leave you with the words of author L.R. Knost, “Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world. All things break and all things can be mended. Not with time, as they say, but with intention. So go. Love intentionally, extravagantly, unconditionally. The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you.”

Best,

Michele Girault