



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. NATIONAL MEMORIAL PROJECT LAUNCHES FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE ON ANNIVERSARY OF KING ASSASSINATION

Michigan Faith-Based Community to Raise \$1 Million to Help Build Memorial

(WASHINGTON, DC) — The Washington, DC Martin Luther King (MLK), Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation kicks off a nationwide grassroots faith-based initiative in Detroit on Monday, April 4, the 37th anniversary of Dr. King's assassination. Foundation representatives, the Michigan faith-based community, and government officials will remember Dr. King and discuss the importance of building the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, on the National Mall in Washington, DC.

"We are reaching out to citizens of all faiths in the campaign to build a national memorial honoring Dr. King," said Harry E. Johnson, Sr., President of the Washington, DC Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial Foundation. "We encourage anyone who has ever benefited from Dr. King's ideals of peace, equality, and justice, which should be all of us, to learn more by visiting www.buildthedream.org."

Detroit was chosen as the kick off city for a number of key reasons: this was the city where Dr. King first delivered his 'I Have a Dream' speech; the city has served a leadership role in the civil rights movement; it is ranked as the #1 city for charitable giving per households by the Chronicle of Philanthropy; and is the city in which the lead Memorial Foundation sponsor, General Motors, is based.

This faith-based initiative will include a series of regional church-based events culminating in a "day of giving", when funds will be raised to help build the memorial. The initiative will continue in the following cities: Montgomery, Houston, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York and Washington, DC.

"As we remember Dr. King today, I am thankful that the faith-based community across Michigan has banded together to help build a lasting memorial to his legacy," said Bishop Charles H. Ellis, III of Detroit's Greater Grace Temple. "I now call on citizens of all cities and faiths to carry out Dr. King's legacy by helping build the King Memorial."

The MLK Memorial will be built on the Tidal Basin, adjacent to the F.D.R. Memorial and in a direct line between the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials. Congress passed Joint Resolutions in 1996 authorizing Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. to establish a memorial honoring Dr. King to be built in Washington, DC. President Clinton signed a Joint Congressional Resolution in 1998. This four-acre memorial will be the first on the National Mall to honor a man of color. The cost of the Memorial is \$100 million, all of which must be raised by private funds. Groundbreaking will take place in late 2006 and the project will be completed in 2008.

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“General Motors is proud to serve as the lead sponsor in building a National Memorial to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,” said Gary Cowger of General Motors and Co-Chairman of the MLK Memorial’s Executive Leadership Council (ELC). “I encourage my colleagues in the corporate world as well as private citizens to join General Motors in creating a permanent legacy to Dr. King on the National Mall for future generations to enjoy.”

The MLK Memorial’s major donors include: General Motors, Tommy Hilfiger Corporate Foundation, The Ford Motor Company Fund, Toyota, Procter and Gamble, Fannie Mae Foundation, AFLAC, The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation, Ann & Joel Horowitz Family Foundation, Federated Department Stores, Bell South, Bank of America Charitable Foundation, and Delta Airlines. The ELC includes: Mrs. Coretta Scott King, Ambassador Andrew Young, Gary Cowger, Suzanne dePasse, George Foreman, William Gray, III, Willie Gary, Joel Horowitz, Vernon Jordan, Tommy Hilfiger, J. W. Marriott, Jr., Franklin Raines, David Stern, Jack Valenti, and Dr. Robert Wright. Morgan Freeman, Nelly, and Carlos Santana are starring in television and radio public services announcements (PSAs).

Media Notes: To schedule an interview with Harry Johnson, please contact Rica Orszag at 202-253-8974 or Ty Christian at 407-421-6553. For more information, visit www.buildthedream.org or call 888 4 THE DREAM.

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