



ALEXA WELCH EDLUND/TIMES-DISPATCH

Lloyd Price (right), director of Boaz & Ruth/AmeriCorps Intake, bows his head during the celebration at Fifth Street Baptist Church.

Helping live King's legacy

In the Richmond area, many serve to honor the civil-rights leader

BY LISA CRUTCHFIELD
Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

It was a day of service and of hope.

Thousands who had a day off work or school made yester-

day a day on, carrying out community service to mark the life and work of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The anticipation of Barack Obama's inauguration as president today inspired many to believe they could make lasting changes.

From working with children to walking dogs, building houses to organizing worship, volunteers participated in more than 70 projects under way in the Richmond area for

the national Day of Service honoring King.

Nationally, more than 12,100 service projects took place.

"This is a time for people to get together and think about service," said Erin Brown, AmeriCorps field coordinator in Virginia Commonwealth University's Division of Community Engagement. "But instead of just thinking, we need to

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Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Watch a candlelight march to honor the memory of King at inRich.com. Keyword: video and slideshow

No-drama Obama

- President-elect joins Day of Service; visit to injured veterans comes first. Page A1.



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People walk down Meadowbridge Road to a dinner at Boaz & Ruth after the celebration at Fifth Street Baptist Church.

King

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get out and do something.

"We hope to be the inspiration for this to become a year of service."

Tommy Cox is one of those who make volunteering more than a one-day affair.

"This is what it's all about," he said. "I spent 26 years in prison. From that, I have learned to try to give something back."

Cox gives talks at juvenile facilities and mentors area youths. Last night, he attended a celebration at Fifth Street Baptist Church in Richmond's Highland Park.

"One by one, if everyone said I want to be better than I am today, then we can change the world," he said.

Dajha Jones, 7, and Tavion Brown, 6, spent part of their school holiday from Carver Elementary in Richmond helping less fortunate children. Both made teddy bears for police to give to children in crisis. "It was fun," Dajha said.

For their efforts, they got to make bears to keep for themselves, said Yetunde Akinola, a reading coach at Carver.

Started by Congress in 1994,

the King Day of Service transformed the holiday honoring King into a national day of service based on his teachings of nonviolence and social justice.

While preparing for his inauguration, Obama painted at a shelter for homeless or runaway teens in Washington. Earlier in the day, he visited Walter Reed Army Medical Center to talk with troops injured in battle.

"These are powerful days," the Rev. F. Todd Gray told about 100 people at Fifth Street Baptist Church. "As we stand on the eve of the inauguration of the first African-American president, these are wonderful days to be alive."

Celebrants sang the traditional "We Shall Overcome." But instead of "some day," the words became, "we shall overcome, today."

Bill Holland of Mechanicsville, who spent much of yesterday listening to recordings of King's speeches, thought about how King would react to the inauguration of the nation's first black president.

"It is the culmination of everything he was dreaming about."

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