



23rd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day Observance: Overcoming Silence and Inaction on Racial Justice

Monday, January 15th, 2 pm

Columbia High School Auditorium

Volunteer Fair at 3:30 pm in the CHS Cafeteria

Join us for this community-wide, interfaith moment to reflect on Dr. King's legacy and the ways we create an integrated community. This year's program includes the inspiring speaker Pastor Willie Dwayne Francois III, Senior Pastor-Elect of Fountain Baptist Church in Summit, NJ, President of the Black Church Center for Justice and Equality, and author of *Silencing White Noise: Six Practices to Overcome Our Inaction on Race*. In addition to Pastor Francois, the program includes CHS dance and choral performances, readings from interfaith leaders, and the children's luminary display.

The Volunteer Fair starts right after the service in the CHS cafeteria: dozens of local organizations will be on hand to provide information. Don't miss this opportunity to honor Dr. King's call to service: "Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve." The community-wide **Luminary Lighting** starts at sundown (more details below).



Calling All Local Organizations and Nonprofits to Participate in the Volunteer Fair!

This year marks the return of the Volunteer Fair in the CHS cafeteria immediately following the Observance. This is your chance to connect with community members, to provide information on your work, and to engage some new volunteers! Organizations interested in participating in the Fair should email [the completed form found here](mailto:audrey.rowe@communitycoalitiononrace.org) to Program Director Audrey Rowe at audrey.rowe@communitycoalitiononrace.org.

Life's most persistent question is, "What are you doing for others?"

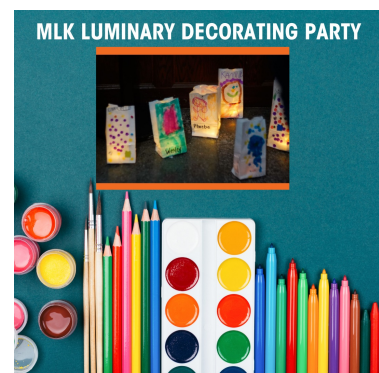
- Martin Luther King Jr.

Luminary Decorating Party 2024

Sunday, January 7th, 3-5 pm

SOPAC (South Orange Performing Arts Center) Loft, South Orange

Parents, guardians, and kids--Join us for an afternoon of art and fun at our 4th annual Luminary Decorating Party. Learn about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and decorate luminaries to place outside your home at sunset on MLK Day. Snacks will be provided.

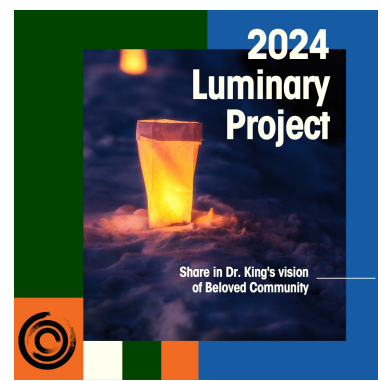


The Luminary Project—SOMA Lights the Way

Hosted each year since 2013 at sunset on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, we ask people to light up the outside of their homes or businesses with Luminaries, white bags with votive candles inside that can be decorated. The goal is for thousands of homes in SOMA to be lit up as a sign of hope, sanctuary, peace, and solidarity with Dr. King's vision of the Beloved Community. The Luminaries come four in a pack for a suggested donation of \$10. **Kits will be available at these local businesses:**

- The Able Baker
- A Paper Hat
- [words] Bookstore
- General Store Cooperative
- Sparkhouse
- Pet Wants
- The Order
- Elitist Coffee
- Oh! Canary

To purchase kits for a large group or your block, send us an email at MLKLuminaryProject@gmail.com.



Thanks to Outgoing Chair Kelly Quirk and Welcome to Incoming Chair Robert A. Marchman

The board and staff are deeply appreciative of Kelly Quirk's leadership over the last four years. Not only did she shepherd the organization through the pandemic period's trials, but she also led the trustees in developing new strategies for meeting the mission and growth in fundraising. We are excited to welcome back Robert A. Marchman as chair in 2024. Robert is a founding member of the Coalition and last served as chair in 2019. The other officers serving on the Executive board for 2024 include Carol Barry-Austin, Anita Gundanna, Jeremy Dobrish, and John Kerner. [Read their leadership bios here.](#)



We are Hiring a Program Coordinator

We are looking for a Program Coordinator who shares our passion for building a truly inclusive community. The Program Coordinator will work with the Program Director and the Executive Director on coordinating programs, volunteerism, projects, and activities aimed at promoting racial diversity, equity, and inclusion in SOMA. This is a part-time position: 20 hours per week that include some regular weeknight meetings and occasional weekends for special events. [See position details and application process here.](#)



Calling All Teaching Artists for Integrated Art Circles 2024!

Integrated Art Circles 2024 offers artists an opportunity to use their art and teaching skills to bring residents together to have fun while

learning a new art form and building relationships with other participants of different races and backgrounds. The Community Coalition's Integration through the Arts Committee has limited paid positions in 2024 for artists to lead these small community groups called Circles. To learn more and receive an application, send an email to SOMACCR.Arts@gmail.com with your name and art discipline.



Looking Ahead to Black History Month this February

'Coming to Jersey: Black Families Share Their Stories' is a collaboration with Durand-Hedden House. Blacks from SOMA are invited to share their stories about how their families came to New Jersey and how they came to live in SOMA. The project will incorporate genealogy, photos, oral storytelling, and conversation with those gathered. SOMA residents who would like to submit their stories should send a summary and contact information to Audrey Rowe at audrey.rowe@communitycoalitiononrace.org by January 19, 2024. To attend the event at Durand-Hedden House on February 11th, 1 pm, [RSVP here](#).

Black Maternal Health Issues is a multi-event forum that will highlight the major racial disparities in deaths, complications, and treatment for Black mothers when compared to White mothers. The series will consider the impact of racism on health, including biased care practices within clinical care, discriminatory hospital policies, and policy solutions and advocacy measures that support reform. The forum will launch in February with the screening of an overview. More details will be on our website later this month.



SOMA Action is hosting: *Jews and Arabs choosing a shared future - A conversation with Standing Together*

Join SOMA Action for a special online panel with Standing Together, a grassroots movement in Israel/Palestine organizing Jewish and Palestinian citizens towards peace, equality and social justice. Gain insights from the activists working tirelessly on the ground as they share their perspectives on reshaping the current narrative and the path forward for achieving systemic societal change, and discover how you too can contribute.

Sunday, January 21st, 1PM EST

Hosted by SOMA Action

To receive the link for the event, RSVP here:

<https://omdi.me/3TnTCVw>



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