

ICCTA Gandhi-King Peace Essay Scholarship

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2020 Recipient

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Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi taught us great things about a culture of peace. They taught us that nonviolence is a strategy for action, not inaction. They showed us that nonviolence is courageous, is forthright, is disciplined and has the capacity to be incredibly successful. Their teachings of nonviolence and messages of love and freedom initiated great change, not only within political systems around the world, but within the minds of men and women in many different countries. As a result, nonviolent direct action has been utilized around our world to establish rights, secure independence, create new democracies and preserve older ones.

As a community college student, I feel that our hope for a better future lies within the education of our world's children. We have recently concluded the most violent century in documented human history. As a result, we must guide our children toward breaking this cycle of confronting differences with violence and hatred. We must take it back to the basics and teach them about love and commitment to one another. We must train them to never hate a person. We must show them that a culture of peace is a commitment that must be practiced every day, not only through our actions but also through our thoughts. We must educate parents that teaching children expressions of hatred, discrimination and prejudice will only stand to hurt these very children as they attempt to function in a peaceful society.

I was born in Mumbai, India and have always felt a sort of "connection" with Mahatma Gandhi. From birth until age 7, I lived in a Mumbai orphanage. Because of my social status, I was no stranger to hatred and discrimination, even in a country that is also the birthplace of this great, great man. After my adoption by an American couple, I was raised in a home with a wonderful, wooden sign that hung on the

wall. It read, "Be the change you wish to see in the world". I would pass this sign many times per day, and that quote became ingrained in both my mind and hopefully, in my actions.

In response to both Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King's call of action to our society, I have chosen to devote my career to helping others. As a social work major, it is my hope that I can use my role to teach love and nonviolence, and to empower others to do the same. In the words of Martin Luther King, "Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon, which cuts without wounding and enables the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals."

It's time to begin healing.

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