

BIRTHDAY BOXES

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY OF SERVICE

SUZANNE ELIA, LEAD: BOILERS IN ACTION



COMMUNITY PARTNER:
FOOD FINDERS FOOD BANK
1204 GREENBUSH ST., LAFAYETTE, IN,
47904

INTRODUCTION

AS THE U.S. CELEBRATED DR. KING'S BIRTHDAY, WE CELEBRATED AS WELL BY HONORING HIS LEGACY OF ADVOCACY AND ACTIVISM FOR JUSTICE. THIS YEAR'S DAY OF SERVICE FOCUSED ON FOOD JUSTICE THROUGH MUTUAL AID, WITH DISCUSSIONS OF CIVIL RIGHTS LUNCH COUNTER PROTESTS AND THE BIRTHDAY BOXES PROJECT SPECIFICALLY FOCUSING ON THE RIGHT TO FOOD AS CELEBRATORY AND ENJOYABLE OUTSIDE OF IT BEING A BASIC HUMAN NECESSITY. TOGETHER WITH THE FOOD FINDERS PANTRY, 20 VOLUNTEERS WERE ABLE TO PUT TOGETHER 100 BIRTHDAY BOXES THAT WILL BE AVAILABLE TO THEIR CLIENTS, YOUNG AND OLD.

IMPACT FOR INDIVIDUALS

BIRTHDAYS ARE DIFFERENT FROM OTHER CELEBRATED HOLIDAYS BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT ABOUT SOMEONE ELSE'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS, A HISTORICAL EVENT LONG GONE, RELIGIOUS, ETC. THEY ARE ALL ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL. ALL CULTURES AROUND THE WORLD RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF ANOTHER FULL YEAR OF LIFE FOR YOURSELF OR SOMEONE YOU LOVE, EVEN AS WE ALL CELEBRATE IN DIFFERENT WAYS. BIRTHDAYS ARE A NATURAL PART OF LIFE THAT SHOULD BE EASILY CELEBRATED AND ENJOYED; HOWEVER, SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES CAN LEAD TO FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS IN POVERTY HAVING TO RATION RESOURCES IN THEIR REGULAR DAY TO DAY AS WELL AS THEIR BIRTHDAYS. WHILE THE BASIC NECESSITIES ARE HIGHLY IMPORTANT, MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS MUST BE ACKNOWLEDGED. HAPPINESS AND ENJOYMENT MUST BE ACKNOWLEDGED. CELEBRATING INDIVIDUAL SIGNIFICANCE, GIVING SUPPORT, REMOVING FINANCIAL PRESSURE, AND FEELING APPRECIATED BY YOUR COMMUNITY AND OTHER PEOPLE ARE ALL WAYS THAT THESE BIRTHDAY BOXES ADDRESS MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR A WONDERFUL BIRTHDAY THAT ALL INDIVIDUALS DESERVE.

REFLECTION

THIS SERVICE PROJECT IS A GREAT WAY TO REFLECT ON PERSPECTIVES IN A WAY THAT SOME STUDENTS HAVE NOT THOUGH OF BEFORE, BECAUSE OFTEN VOLUNTEERING IS FOCUSED ON BASIC NECESSITIES.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I AM SO GRATEFUL TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNER, FOOD FINDERS, THE FIVE OTHER STUDENT WORKERS WHO PLANNED THE EVENT- ANNA BULLOCK, LARA SANTIAGO-SACARELLO, LIBBY SORENSON, RAISHMA ANWAR, AND EMMANI ELLIS- COORDINATORS VIVIANA TSANGAROPOULOS AND SYD MOORE, VOLUNTEER STUDENT LEADERS, THE 107 STUDENT VOLUNTEERS, THE SLG COMMITTEE, AND LEAD/BIA DIRECTORS AND SUPPORTERS INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO MELISSA GRUVER AND CHRISTELLE MUTOMBO.

BIRTHDAY KITS INCLUDE:

- DECORATED BOX
- A BOX OF CAKE MIX
- A CAN OF FROSTING
- CANDLES
- A WALL DECORATION
- A BIRTHDAY CARD

ALSO IN HALF, GEARED TOWARDS CHILDREN:

- CHILDREN'S BOOK "HOW DID THAT GET IN MY LUNCHBOX?"



PHOTO: BILL SHUGARTS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICES VOLUNTEER

"ALL LABOR THAT UPLIFTS HUMANITY HAS DIGNITY AND IMPORTANCE AND SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN WITH PAINSTAKING EXCELLENCE."

DR. MLK JR.