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Students seek to continue legacy of peace

350
■ Obama inauguration plays big role in King festivities

By Karen Holzmeister
and Eric Kurhi

STAFF WRITERS

SAN LEANDRO — Monday may have been a school holiday, but 80 San Leandro High School students spent five hours in classrooms on a quest for peace.

On the day honoring the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., they designed quilt squares, practiced ways to deflect campus conflict, and quoted King, Cesar Chavez and — not surprisingly — President-elect Barack Obama.

Using special crayons and markers for fabric, Mairene Fulgado, 17, created a globe on her 6-inch-by-8 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muslin quilting square. She superimposed a clock over the globe, and encircled it with words from an Obama speech last July in Germany:

"People of Berlin, people of the world: This is our moment, this is our time."

"I read the quote and it grabbed my attention," said Fulgado.

In Hayward, the day started with a morning march in honor of King that attracted around 200 people downtown. The rally — in its eighth year — was led by the faith-based congregations of the South Hayward Parish. It included a reading of King's words and songs from local choirs.



JIM STEVENS/STAFF

MARCHERS CARRYING a variety of signs walk in downtown Hayward on Monday in celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Other festivities included a choir, readings from King's speeches and live music.

MARKERS CARRYING a variety of signs

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Another event honored King, as well as the late Tuskegee airman and Hayward resident Woodie Spears, at Centennial Hall. Spears died in May, but is fondly remembered by event organizers.

"He spoke here for MLK Day two years ago," said Marilyn Baker-Madsen. "Afterward, he had people lined up waiting to talk to him personally — that's how much he was loved in the community. We had to end it at 11 p.m. and people were still waiting."

Baker-Madsen said they planned to have other Tuskegee airmen at the event, but they were trumped when Obama extended an invita-

tion for them to attend his inauguration.

"I think they're all over in D.C. right now," Baker-Madsen said. She added that they opted to keep the Centennial Hall event, which started in 1986, focused on King and Spears.

"But there's still a connection," she said. "Obviously his legacy has prevailed and his dream is alive."

In San Leandro, Andrew Ly's quilt square depicted two extended hands, palms up, with Obama's name in the upper right-hand corner.

The hands are meant to represent the glaring contrast between

MARKERS CARRYING a variety of signs

wealth and poverty, and his hope that Obama "will spread the wealth around," said Ly, an 18-year-old senior.

"That's good for everybody," English teachers Casey Wilson, 29, and Tracey Levy, 46, worked with the 80 students in morning and afternoon sessions.

They were among six teachers who came in on their day off to help the students begin a 10-week "Sea-son of Service, Period of Peace" campaign on the Bancroft Avenue campus.

The campaign, launched on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, will end on Cesar Chavez's March 31

birthday. Planned events include 24-hour student fasts, multimedia projects and a concluding memorial service for East Bay youths who have died by violence.

Wilson and Levy asked the students, "If you stand for peace, what do you want to say?"

The teachers now will take the squares and, as their own project, create and stitch backing on the quilt, stuff it with batting for a middle layer and create a border.

The finished quilt will be on display throughout the San Leandro school district, possibly at city locations and finally on permanent display at the high school.

Wilson is a quilter, and Levy said that, as a child, her grandfather taught her quilting.

"This is purely heartfelt, and one of the nicer, creative things I will do this year," Levy said.

Monday's activities were coordinated by the Alameda County Office of Education, which has partnered with the high school to prevent school violence.

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Summit

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"Here, they learn necessary information about what is required — how to apply, what requirements must be met, what is college life like," he said.

While the numbers of Latino college students are rising, there is still a need to encourage and inform more families, he said. The university's Web site states the number of full-time Hispanic students in a bachelors programs

in 2003 was 1,114 and rose to 1,321 in 2007. The 2007 figures for other ethnic groups in a full-time bachelors program was 2,666 for the Asian/Pacific group; 2,210 for white students; 1,572 for "Other"; 1,209 for African-American students and 64 for American Indian students.

In all categories, female enrollment was higher than male enrollment.

Cal State East Bay's enrollment recently reached the highest number in school history, at more than 14,000. India Christman, the university's executive director for planning

and enrollment management, said she thinks the increase is due in part to the institution's push for more public exposure.

"There has been an explosive growth, especially since we've had the new president (Mohammad H. Qayoumi)," Christman said, adding that there is still room for more students — even though the Cal State system is looking to steer some incoming freshmen away from some of its other, more crowded campuses.

The staff at Cal State East Bay has made a concerted effort to get the word out about

campus improvements, such as its expanded dorms and the lower prices compared with private colleges and the UC system, said Gregory Smith, Cal State East Bay's associate vice president for planning and enrollment management.

"A lot more students are living here," he said. "And even to the commuting students, this has become more like a four-year campus environment."

Saturday's summit ended with a complimentary lunch and drum and Aztec dance performances. A summit for African-American students is planned for next month. *CK*

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