

Norwalk schools to celebrate MLK Day

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NORWALK

By DANIELLE CAPALBO, Hour Staff Writer

On the 25th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Norwalk Public Schools will celebrate the man's life and legacy with a free event open to community members.

"It is a day to reflect, as individuals and community at large, where we are in terms of fulfilling and sustaining The Dream," said Rosa Murray, chairman of the planning committee, in a statement.

The celebration -- called "Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day On, Not a Day Off" -- will run from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday at West Rocks Middle School.

It will feature workshops for parents, arts-and-crafts for children, musical performances from Brookside Elementary School students and thoughts from keynote speaker Gwen Edwards, the host of "Our Lives" on News 12.

Local agencies, including A.C.H.I.E.V.E., the George Washington Carver Community Foundation and The Courage To Speak Foundation, will also be recognized Monday for their exemplary service to Norwalk students.

Although schools will be closed, families throughout Norwalk are encouraged to attend the celebration, said Bruce Morris, another member of the committee and the human relations officer for Norwalk Public Schools.

"On some holidays, like Veterans Day, which are intended to honor those who have given their lives for noble causes, people take the day off," he said. "In that case, children don't get to learn the value of the sacrifices that were made for our democracy."

Particularly today, Morris said, with political temperatures at alarming highs and violence on the streets of Norwalk, children and adults alike should revisit the late reverend's message. He called it one of "redemption," trademarked by peaceful resistance and devoted to the "beloved community."

"To some extent, we may have to consider how we establish his legacy in the city of Norwalk and re-establish it nationally," he said. "It's been 25 years since the observance was established, 25

years from now, what do they want Norwalk and the nation to look like for their children and their children?”

Before the celebration, community members can pay \$15 to attend a prayer breakfast at 8 a.m., also at West Rocks Middle School. Members of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths will make a panel-style presentation called “Embracing King’s Spirit of Unity: Accentuating What We Hold In Common.”

And Monday night, beginning at 7 p.m., community members are also invited to hear remarks from Rev. Jeffrey A. Ingraham, the pastor of Calvary Baptist Church.

“The opportunity to do this as a community only comes once a year – although it should be more often,” Morris said. Visit www.couragetospeak.org.